English Translations of

Majmoo’al-Fatawa of late Scholar Ibn Bazz (R)

Second Edition

By:
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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Obligation of Performing Salah in Congregation

From 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to whosoever receives this advice among the Muslim brothers, the Imams (the ones who lead congregational Prayer) and Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer). May Allah lead us and them to His Straight Path! Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

It is quite clear to everybody that Salah (prayer) has great importance in Islam; it is the pillar of Islam which renders a Muslim's religion proper, his deeds right and his religious and worldly affairs sound when it is performed according to the Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) way as a `Aqidah (creed) and `Ibadah (worship) following the example of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Concerning the Salah, Allah (Exalted be He) says in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an: ﴾Verily, As-Salât (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshâ' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed)﴿ And: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ Besides, Salah purifies the person from sins and erases his or her faults. It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "I heard

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the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾'Do you not think that if there was a river at the door of any one of you, and he were to bathe in it five times a day, would there be any dirt left on him?' They said, 'No dirt would be left on him at all.' He said, 'That is the likeness of the five daily prayers, by means of which Allah erases sins.'"﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

A Muslim should not neglect a Faridah (obligatory act); it is the link between him and his Lord (Exalted be He). Every person should do his best to understand its rulings which Allah has prescribed for the believer to observe carefully with Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and tranquility, outwardly and inwardly. It is reported on the authority of `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾When the time for a prescribed prayer is due and a Muslim performs its Wudu' (ablution) well and its acts of bowing and Khushu` properly, this prayer will be an expiation for his past sins, as long as he does not commit major sins, and this applies for all times.﴿ (Related by Muslim)

All Muslims should fear Allah in all their acts in general and in their Salah in particular; you have to observe it regularly, avoiding what nullifies or imperfects it; you should not delay it

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without any Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse or linger to perform it in Congregation at the Masjids (mosques) or do what contradicts Khushu` and distracts the heart from reflecting upon the Majesty of your Lord to Whom you offer Salah and from contemplating His Words (Qur'an). You should not do any unacceptable trivial acts such as frequently adjusting one's clothes or looking at the clock or running the fingers through one's beard after starting Salah. All these acts negate, decrease or weaken the Khushu` which is the core and spirit of Salah and the reason for making it acceptable. Warning against such acts, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾A person might perform his Salah and he is rewarded only for half of it... until he said or for one-tenth of it.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud through a good Sanad)

All Muslims, in general, and all Imams, in particular, should have a great deal of knowledge about the rulings of Salah and set good examples when offering this great ritual, for the Ma'mums imitate them and the ignorant and the young learn from them. Some of the common people may think that

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the action of the Imam - even if it contradicts the Sunnah - is an act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet); this may occur particularly on the part of some Muslims coming from foreign countries among those who do not know the rulings of Salah as prescribed religiously. Moreover, some Imams and Ma'mums may neglect straightening the rows which is a Command from Allah which one fears that neglecting it may raise the Wrath of Allah (Exalted be He) on account of the reported threat in this regard. It is reported on the authority of Abu Mas`ud Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: ﴾'The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to gently pat our shoulders (when we were standing in rows) at the time of Salah and say, "Keep (the rows) straight and do not differ from each other (do not be irregular) lest your hearts should suffer from discord."﴿ (Related by Muslim)

It was reported in the two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Al-Nu`man ibn Bashir (may Allah be pleased with them) who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Either you straighten your rows or Allah will cause inversion among your faces."﴿

It was reported on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Straighten your rows, for the straightening of rows is a part of the perfection of Salah.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

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The Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) urges people to straighten rows and to offer Salah in Congregation at the Masjid as the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) and the Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet) used to observe it. This entitles a person to the great reward from Allah. It was reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"He who goes to the Masjid at dawn or dusk (for Salah), Allah prepares a hospitable abode for him in Jannah (Paradise), every time he walks to it or comes back from it."﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It was also reported on his authority that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who purifies himself in his house, and then walks to one of the Houses of Allah (Masjids) for the sake of performing an Obligation of Allah, both his steps (would be significant) as one of them would obliterate his sin and the second one would raise his status.﴿ (Related by Muslim)

Accordingly, each person should be aware of the phenomenon of lingering to observe the `Isha' (Night) Prayer and the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer in Congregation at the Masjid; it is a grave habit for it is one of the bad characteristics of the hypocrites. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The most burdensome prayers

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for the hypocrites are the `Isha' Prayer and the Fajr Prayer. If they were to know the blessings they have in store, they would have come to them, even if crawling.﴿ There is no Rukhsah (concession) without a Shar`y excuse for whoever hears the Adhan (call to Prayer) but does not answer it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for the) Salah for him except with an excuse."﴿ ﴾There came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) a blind man who said, "O, Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid". He, therefore, asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) permission to perform Salah at home. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him, "Do you hear the call to prayer?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Respond to it, then."﴿ In another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I do not find any permission for you﴿ It was reported that Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "He who likes to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim, he should persevere in observing these prayers, when a call is announced for them, for Allah has laid down for your Prophet the paths of right guidance, and these (prayers) are among the paths of right guidance. If you were to pray in your houses as this man who stays away (from the mosque) prays in his house, you would abandon the practice of your Prophet, and if you were to abandon the practice of your Prophet,

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you would go astray. I have seen the time when no one stayed away from it, except a hypocrite, who was well known for his hypocrisy, whereas a man would be brought swaying (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in a row." (Related by Muslim)

These Hadiths indicate that it is an obligation to attend Salah in Congregation when the Adhan is pronounced. Abiding by this is an act of obedience to Allah and His Messenger that brings about happiness in this worldly life and in the Hereafter and keeps away from resembling the hypocrites.

I ask Allah (Exalted be He) to guide us all to whatever pleases Him and to help us remain adherent to His Religion and observe the five obligatory prayers when the Adhan is pronounced and to perform them with Khushu` and tranquility, hoping for reward from Allah and fearing from His Punishment. He is the One Who is Capable of doing so!

May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

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Neglecting Salah in Congregation is a Great Munkar

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to whomever receives it among Muslims, may Allah guide them to what pleases Him and make them and me among those who fear Him! Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have been told that many people neglect observing obligatory Salah in Congregation taking as their pretext leniency of some scholars in this issue. Hence, it is my duty to point out the seriousness and paramount importance of this matter. It is not permissible for scholars to keep silent about this clear Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect).

Undoubtedly, a Muslim should not disregard the matter, which Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) made significant and great.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) frequently stresses the importance of observing Salah in Congregation in His Noble Book, the Qur'an.

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Thus, the act of neglecting observing Salah is an attribute of the hypocrites. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)].﴿

When a servant abandons observing Salah with his brothers in Congregation, people will not know that he observes and pays attention to it. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.﴿ This Ayah proves that it is obligatory upon each and every individual to offer Salah in congregation. Had Allah commanded us to just perform it, the following command would not have been stated clearly in the last part of this Ayah: ﴾and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.﴿ because the command of performing Salah is already mentioned in the beginning of the Ayah. Allah (Exalted be He) says:﴾ When you (O Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) are among them, and lead them in As-Salât (the prayer), let one party of them stand up [in Salât (prayer)] with you taking their arms with them; when they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear and let the other party come up which have not yet prayed, and let them pray with you taking all the precautions and bearing arms.﴿

Allah has made it an obligation upon Muslims to observe Salah in Congregation at times of war and great panic. If this is the case, then what about doing so at times of peace! If it is possible to leave

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the congregational Salah, those who are engaged in war against the enemy would have an excuse for leaving it. So, it becomes evident that observing Salah in Congregation is one of the most important obligations and that no one is allowed to give it up.

It is narrated in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I had thought of ordering that wood be gathered, then I would command the call to prayer to be given, and I would appoint a man to lead the people in prayer, then I would go to men [who do not attend the congregational prayer] and burn their houses down around them.﴿ It is narrated in the Musnad of Imam Ahmad that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Had not the women and children been in the houses, I would have set fire to their houses (i.e., men who do not attend congregational prayers in the mosque).﴿

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: "At the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), we used to think that no one failed to attend Salah in Congregation but a hypocrite who was known for his hypocrisy, or one who was sick. Yet, the sick man would be brought swaying (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in a row. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) taught us the ways of guidance and told us that one of the ways of guidance is to observe Prayers in the mosque

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when the call to prayer is uttered. It is also narrated that he said: "Whoever would like to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim, let him regularly perform these prayers when the call for them is made, for they are among the ways of guidance. Allah (May He be Exalted) has prescribed for your Prophet ways of guidance. If you pray in your homes, as this person who stays apart from congregation, prays in his home, then you will have abandoned the Sunnah of your Prophet. If you abandon the Sunnah of your Prophet you will go astray. There is no man who purifies himself and does it well, then he goes to one of these mosques, but for every step he takes, Allah will record for him one reward (good deed) and will raise him thereby one degree in status, and will erase for him one sin (bad deed). I saw us (at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and no one stayed behind from these prayers except a hypocrite who was known for his hypocrisy. A man would come supported by two others so that he could stand in the row".

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that ﴾A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I do not have a guide to lead me to the mosque," and he asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to grant him a concession allowing him to pray in his house, and he allowed him that, but when he turned away the Prophet called him back and asked, "Do you hear the call to prayer?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Then answer it.﴿ It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever hears the Adhan (call to salah) and does not come to it, then there is no (reward for the) Salah for him except with an excuse.﴿ When Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked about the excuse, he replied:

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It is either fear or illness.

There are many Hadiths that indicate that observing congregational Salah in the Masjids (mosques) where Allah has ordered it to be raised and that His Name be mentioned is one of the most important obligations. Therefore, it is the duty of all Muslims to pay attention to this matter and give advice to their sons, family, neighbors and all Muslim brethren to do so. In this way, they obey Allah's Command and His Messenger, avoid the prohibition and escape the imitation of the hypocrites who are labeled as ill-mannered people. Among the bad qualities of the hypocrites is their lazy attitude toward Salah. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allâh, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for As-Salât (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allâh but little.﴿ ﴾(They are) swaying between this and that, belonging neither to these nor to those; and he whom Allâh sends astray, you will not find for him a way (to the truth - Islâm).﴿

Abandoning congregational Salah mostly leads to total abandonment of Salah. It is known that abandoning Salah is an act of disbelief and misguidance, which renders a Muslim a disbeliever. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Between a man and shirk and kufr there stands his giving up Salah.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him)

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah.

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He who abandons Salah becomes a disbeliever.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and the four authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes through an authentic Isnad)

There is an abundance of Ayahs and Hadiths that stress the importance of observing Salah, the obligation to observe it as ordained by Allah and warn against abandoning it. It is incumbent upon every Muslim to observe it in Congregation in the Masjid at its due time. It should be offered as ordained by Allah with the Muslim congregation in the Masjids, where Allah orders it to be raised and His Name to be mentioned to obey Allah and His Messenger and avoid Allah's Wrath and Punishment.

When the truth and the evidence are clear, it becomes impermissible for everyone to deviate from it because of the view of so and so. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾(And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿

Allah also says: ﴾And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah - legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.﴿

Furthermore, the great benefits of observing Salah in Congregation are too evident.

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For example, this Salah opens the door to the Muslims to know, cooperate in righteousness and piety, and recommend one another to hold fast to the truth. They can encourage the people who miss the congregation and instruct the ignorant ones. The congregational Salah can be a means to scorn the hypocrites, shun away from their way, manifest the Islamic rituals among His Servants, and call to Allah through words and deeds, etc.

Many people oversleep and miss the Fajr (dawn) Prayer. Others miss the `Isha' Prayer. This is a blatant sin and an act of imitating the hypocrites about whom Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth (grade) of the Fire; no helper will you find for them.﴿ Allah also says: ﴾The hypocrites, men and women, are one from another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief and polytheism of all kinds and all that Islâm has forbidden), and forbid (people) from Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and they close their hands [from giving (spending in Allâh's Cause) alms]. They have forgotten Allâh, so He has forgotten them. Verily, the hypocrites are the Fâsiqûn (rebellious, disobedient to Allâh).﴿ ﴾Allâh has promised the hypocrites - men and women - and the disbelievers, the Fire of Hell; therein shall they abide. It will suffice them. Allâh has cursed them and for them is the lasting torment.﴿ In other Ayahs, Allah (Exalted be He) further says: ﴾And nothing prevents their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allâh and in His Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and that they came not to As-Salât (the prayer) except in a lazy state, and that they offer not contributions but unwillingly.﴿ ﴾So let not their wealth nor their children amaze you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم); in reality Allâh's Plan is to punish them with these things in the life of this world, and that their souls shall depart (die) while they are disbelievers.﴿

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Every Muslim, male or female, should shun way from imitating the hypocrites in their sayings, deeds, and idleness regarding their missing of the Night and Dawn prayers so as not to be resurrected with them on the Day of Resurrection. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the night prayer and the morning prayer. If they were to know the blessings they have in store, they would have come to them, even if crawling.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾He who imitates any people is one of them.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad on the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) through an authentic Isnad)

May Allah guide me and you to what pleases Him and rectifes the affairs of the worldly life and the Hereafter! We seek refuge from Allah from the evils of ourselves, our misdeeds, and from imitating the disbelievers and the hypocrites for He is the Most Generous and the Bestower of Good.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh. May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

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Q: S.M.B. from Riyadh asks: I have children whose ages range between nine and twenty five, but they do not offer congregational Salah (Prayer) despite my persistent orders and sharp admonition to them. I even wake them up for the Salah (Prayer), and after being sure that they have started to perform Wudu' (ablution), I ask their mother to complete this task and urge them to go to the Masjid (mosque). Nevertheless, they do not come, especially at the time of Fajr (Dawn) Salah. This takes place during my stay with them, but when I am away - as I am married to another woman - they rarely come to observe Salah in the Masjid. Furthermore, I asked their mother to command them to observe the Salah in the Masjid and act on my behalf during my absence using all possible means of threatening and even beating them when necessary, but she refuses to do so claiming that this is my own responsibility not hers. What is your advice for me, her, and them? Does she have a right in her claim? Please advise us. May Allah reward you well!

A: All of you should help each other in virtue and Taqwah (fearing Allah as He should be feared) and do your best to offer the Salah in congregation, even if this leads you and their mother to beat whoever has reached or exceeded the age of ten amongst them.

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This comes in compliance with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾Command your children to pray at (the age of) seven, and beat them for (neglecting) it at (the age of) ten, and separate between them in beds (i.e., provide separate beds for them to sleep on).﴿

Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden)﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Anyone amongst you who sees a Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) must change it with their hand [i.e., by taking action]; and if they cannot, then with their tongue [i.e., by speaking out]; and if they cannot, then with their heart [i.e., by hating it and feeling that it is wrong] – and that is the weakest of Iman (faith/belief).﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). .

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Anyone who hears the call (for Prayer) but does not come, has no Salah unless he has a (lawful) excuse.﴿ It was said to Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them): "What is the excuse legally considered?" He said: "It is either fear or illness".

There are many Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) and Hadiths reported in this regard. May Allah set right our offspring as well as the offspring of all Muslims, and support you and their mother to that which implies benefit and safety for all! He is All-Generous and Bountiful!

Q: An old man approaching his thirty years observes Salah (Prayer) at home most of the times. However, he, sometimes, attends the Congregational and Friday Salah, but he does not seem to be keen to abide by the Congregation despite his mother's continuous urging for him to observe Salah in Congregation. Some people have recommended her to show a fit of anger and repudiate him, perhaps he may come back. Yet, she fears for him and prefers to advise him. Please, provide me with the detailed evidence for the obligation on performing Salah in Congregation, and the duty of a Muslim towards obeying Allah and thanking Him for the good blessings He has bestowed upon him, such as health, youth, and plentiful sustenance, praise be to Allah. What is the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) ruling on accompanying and eating with him while he is still on this case? I would also like you to cordially advise the mother on how she should deal with this young man to make him respond to her?

A: There is no doubt that offering the Congregational Salah in the Masjids (mosques) is one of the most important Fara'id (pl. of Faridah; obligatory act). It is one of the rituals of Islam that should be carefully observed by every Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) who should hasten to perform the Salah in congregation with other Muslims and shun away from imitating the hypocrites.

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Whoever likes to meet Allah tomorrow (i.e., after death) as a Muslim, let them maintain these Salahs when the call for them is pronounced,

for they are among the ways of guidance which Allah has prescribed for your Prophet, and if you pray in your homes, as the one who falls behind the Salah does, you will have abandoned the way of your Prophet. And if you abandon the way of your Prophet, you will go astray. I saw us (at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when none would fall behind them (i.e., the congregational Salah) except a hypocrite who was known for his hypocrisy. A man- namely one of the Prophet's Companions- would come supported by two others - he meant a sick or an old man - so that he could stand in the row by dint of their keenness to perform Salah in congregation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Anyone who hears the call (for Prayer) but does not come, has no Salah (i.e., his individual Prayer will not count), unless he has a (lawful) excuse﴿ It was said to Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them): "What excuse could there be?" He said: "It is either fear or illness".

It is also reported in the Sahih (authentic book of Hadith) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that ﴾A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid. Do I have a Rukhsah (concession) to perform Salah in my house? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him: "Can you hear the call to Salah?" He said: "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said: "Then respond (to it)"﴿ (Related by Muslim)

In another narration, other than that related by Imam Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾I do not find any Rukhsah for you﴿ .

In addition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was about to burn the houses of those who fall behind the Salah as it is related in the two Sahihs that he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I was about to order the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) of Salah (to be announced), and when it was announced, I would then order a man to lead the people (in Salah), and go with some men carrying bundles of firewood to people who did not attend the Salah and burn their houses down over them﴿ This is what he (peace be upon him) said. According to the narration of Imam Ahmad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) : ﴾If it were not for the women and children in the houses, I would have burned them (i.e., their houses) over them (i.e., those who fall behind).﴿ This means that Salah in congregation in the Houses of Allah i.e., the Masjids, is an obligation. It is also one of the rituals of Muslims and those who adhere to Haqq (truth). Therefore, missing it in Congregation and offering it at home is one of the characteristics of the hypocrites. Accordingly, a Muslim should not agree to be likened to them, about whom Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allâh, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for As-Salât (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allâh but little.﴿ ﴾(They are) swaying between this and that, belonging neither to these nor to those﴿

Allah (Exalted be He) mentioned that they have five bad characteristics: The first of which is that they seek to deceive Allah and those who believed, for they do not have either faithfulness or honesty, rather deceit, trickery, and cunningness in their behavior towards Muslims. The second is that when they stand up for Salah, they stand with laziness, since they do not have any vigor for suffering due to their lack of faith. Rather, it is a sort of hypocrisy. The third is that they do not remember Allah except a little out of their heedlessness. The fourth is that they are hypocrites, who only seek to show their acts to people without having a tinge of sincerity or devotion towards Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). The fifth is that they are shaky and hesitant without having a clear vision or a true aim for what they want; sometimes they accompany the Mu'minin (believers) and at other times they are inclined to the Kuffar (disbelievers). They have neither rules, strong belief, nor true Iman. On the contrary, whenever the believers gain victory, they show their support for them, and if the Kuffar overpower, they tend to take their side. This is the case of the hypocrites. On this basis, how can a believer accept to be likened to them in falling behind the Congregational Salah!

Apart from this, the mother who has advised her son to offer the Congregational Salah has done well as this is her duty. It is incumbent upon her to persevere in this act and carry on advising and abandoning him if he refuses to obey her.

She should seek the Support of Allah then search for assistance from any righteous relatives of her son such as his father, elder brother, uncles, and so on.

To sum up, whoever is known for his falling behind the Congregational Salah should be abandoned and punished by rulers and guardians until they become upright and start to abide by observing Congregational Salah.

It is clearly known that falling behind the Salah in Congregation is one of the greatest reasons leading to abandoning Salah altogether - I seek refuge in Allah - for the heart's sickness which deludes a person to fall behind the Salah will mostly lead them to take it lightly and abandon it. This will result in a person showing hypocrisy, thus offering Salah only when he feels shy in the presence of some people while abandoning it when he is left alone. This is the attitude of the hypocrites - I seek refuge in Allah. Therefore, a person should be aware of that. Finally, it is obligatory upon the mother, relatives, and companions of this young man to advise him and provide their support in this respect. If he continues to reject the advice, they should abandon him. We ask Allah to grant guidance to all!

Q: I often miss the `Asr Salah (Prayer) in Congregation. I offer it at home because of my work which always finishes while the Adhan (call to Prayer) of `Asr is being called. I leave the work while I am feeling exhausted due to not having a break or even time to eat, which makes me incapable of offering Salah on time. Is it permissible for me

to offer it at home and delay it beyond its time?

A: What you have mentioned is not a legal excuse for delaying Salah in Congregation. You should hasten to offer it in the House of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) (i.e., the Masjids [mosques]). Later on, you can have rest and food. This is because Allah (Glorified be He) has commanded you to offer it on time with your fellow Muslims. Furthermore, the reason you have mentioned is not a Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse for delaying it. It stems from being dazzled by Satanic insinuations, inclination to evil, weak Iman (faith/belief), and a lack of fear of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). Therefore, you should be aware of your personal desires and your inclination to evil so as to gain the good end, be saved (i.e. from Hellfire), and win the worldly life and the Hereafter. May Allah protect you from the evil of yourself and the insinuations of Satan.

Q: Some people, may Allah guide us and them, miss the Congregational Prayers with no legal excuse. Some of them argue that they are busy with worldly matters. Yet, when one advises such people, they show persistent arrogance and reiterate the phrase: 'Prayer is for Allah and none has the right to interfere with that'. So, what is your point of view?

A: Indeed, exchange of advice among Muslims and forbidding evil are among the most important

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duties. Allah (Exalted be He) said: (The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden)) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (Whoever, amongst you, sees something abominable should rectify it with his hand. If he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of Faith.) He (peace be upon him) also said: (Religion is based upon giving advice. Upon this it was said: "For whom?" He replied, "For Allah, His Book, His Messenger, and for the leaders and the common Muslims.) (Both Hadiths are related by Muslim in his Sahih)

Undoubtedly, the neglect of Congregational Prayer without a legal excuse is one of the abominable acts that should be forbidden. This is because it is necessary for men to offer the five obligatory prayers in mosques according to many proofs including the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: (Whoever hears the call (to prayer) and does not reply to it, then there is no prayer (valid) for him unless he has an excuse.) (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutny, and others. Al-Hakim classed it as Sahih. It has indeed a good Isnad "chain of transmitters") It is authentically reported that: (A blind man said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), "O Allah's Messenger, I have no one to lead me to the mosque, am I permitted to offer prayer in my house? The Prophet

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(peace be upon him) said to him: "Do you hear the call to prayer?" He said: "Yes." The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "Then, reply to it".) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih)

There are many Hadiths that assure this meaning. Therefore, a Muslim should not become angry if his brother in Islam blames him for committing an abominable act. Rather, this person should respond sweetly and say good things, and even thank him and supplicate to Allah to grant him goodness for he calls him to obedience to Allah and reminds him of the Right of Allah. It is not permissible to deem oneself far above the caller to truth. Criticizing a person who does so and threatening them with the punishment of the Hell, Allah (Exalted be He) says: (And when it is said to him, "Fear Allâh", he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. So enough for him is Hell, and worst indeed is that place to rest!) We invoke Allah to grant guidance to all Muslims.

Q: A questioner from Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, says: My husband has a noble character. He offers Salah (Prayer) but he does not go to the Masjid (Mosque) or offer supererogatory Prayers. If I wake him up to offer Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, he becomes angry with me. So I do not do so anymore. He says that it is enough that he does not do anything that incurs Allah's Wrath and that he is a good-hearted person. Please, advise him.

A: It is obligatory upon all the Mukallafs (persons meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) to offer the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers

in congregation at the Masjid. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.) He (Exalted be He) says: (When you (O Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) are among them, and lead them in As-Salât (the prayer), let one party of them stand up [in Salât (prayer)] with you taking their arms with them) When Salah in congregation is an obligation at the time of fear, so it is more logical to be performed in congregation at the time of security. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ("Whoever hears the Adhan (call to Prayer) and does not respond, his Salah is rejected unless he is excused.") (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutny, Ibn Hibban, and Al-Hakim with an authentic) chain of narration) Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked, "What is a valid excuse?" He replied: "It is either fear or illness." It was authentically reported that: ("A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying, "O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid," and asked for a Rukhsah (concession) to perform Salah in his house, he (peace be upon him) said, "Do you hear the Adhan?" He said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said, "Then respond (to it).") (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith). Ibn Mas`ud

(may Allah be pleased with him) said: "He who likes to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim, should persevere in observing these prayers, when a call is announced for them, for Allah (Exalted be He) has laid down for your Prophet the ways of right guidance, and these (prayers) are among the ways of right guidance. If you were to pray in your houses as this man who stays away (from the Masjid) and offers Salah in his house, you would abandon the practice of your Prophet, and if you were to abandon the practice of your Prophet, you would go astray. No man purifies himself perfectly, then heads for one of the Masjids but Allah will record a blessing for him for every step he takes, raising him a degree for it and effacing a sin from him for it. I have seen the time when no one abandoned it, except a hypocrite, who was well known for his hypocrisy, or a sick person. During this time, a man would be brought swaying (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in a row." (Related by Muslim in his Sahih book of Hadith).

You should advise and urge him to offer Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib (supererogatory acts that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) along with the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. It is recommended to offer four supererogatory Rak`ahs before Zhuhr in the form of pairs and two after it, two after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, two after `Isha' (Night) Prayer, and two before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. These Twelve Rak`ahs are called Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib. It was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to keep on offering them. He (peace be upon him) says: ("A house will be built in Paradise for anyone who prays in a day and a night twelve voluntary Rak`ahs.")

It is authentically reported from Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the twelve Rak`ahs are Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib. It is Mustahab (desirable) to offer four Rak`ahs before `Asr, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("May Allah have mercy on a man who performs four Rak`ahs before `Asr Prayer.") It is better to offer them in the form of pairs, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("The (optional) Salah (Prayer) performed during the day should be two by two) (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with Sahih (authentic) chain of narration). It is better to offer four Rak`ahs after the Zhuhr Prayer and four before it, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever observes the practice of performing four Rak`ahs before Zhuhr and four after Zhuhr, Allah will protect them against the Fire (of Hell).") Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes)

with a Sahih chain of transmission on the authority of the mother of the believers Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her).

Your husband should be careful and should not delay the performance of Fajr Prayer as this is a form of major Kufr (disbelief) according to the soundest of the two opinions of scholars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Verily, between a man and Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and Kufr (disbelief) is the neglect of prayer.") (Related by Muslim in his Sahih book of Hadith)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("The covenant that distinguishes between us and them (the hypocrites) is Salah. Anyone who abandons it is a Kafir.") (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with a Sahih chain of transmission on the authority of Buraydah ibn Al-Hasib (may Allah be pleased with him)

There are many Hadiths that indicate the greatness of Salah and urge people to offer them in their due time with the congregation. May Allah guide your husband as well as all Muslims, and protect him from the evils of himself, and enable you to help him do good deeds. Allah is All-Hearer, Ever Near!

On the other hand, your husband's saying that he does not do anything that incurs Allah's Wrath and that he is a good-hearted person is a form of arrogance and self-conceit. Undoubtedly, delaying the performance of Salah and neglecting the congregational Prayer in the Masjid incur Allah's Wrath. Doubtless to say, a person whose heart is full of Iman (faith) and Taqwah (fearing Allah as He should be feared) does not delay Salah and does not neglect congregational Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("There is a piece of flesh in the body, which if it is good the whole body is good but if it is spoiled the whole body is spoiled, and that is the heart.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on offering Salah at home if the Masjid is far

Q: I live in a remote area. Sometimes, I have to go to the Masjid by car. If I walk on foot, I would miss the Salah. It is worth mentioning that I hear the Adhan from the loudspeakers. So, is there any blame on me if I offer Salah at home

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with three or more of my neighbors? Could you kindly advise me? May Allah reward you!

A: It is obligatory to offer Salah with your Muslim brothers in the Masjid as long as you hear the Adhan (call to prayer) if it is announced in the natural way without using loudspeakers when it is quiet and nothing prevents you from hearing it. If you are far away and cannot hear the Adhan without the loudspeakers, it is permissible for you to offer Salah with your neighbors at home (for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the blind man who asked for permission to pray at home: "Do you hear the call to Salah (prayer)?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Then, answer it.") (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih (book of authentic Hadiths).

The Prophet also said: (Whoever hears the call (to salah) and he does not come to it, will have no valid salah unless with a valid excuse.) (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutny, Ibn Hibban, and Al-Hakim with an authentic chain of narration). When you answer the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) even if you are far away and endure hardship on foot or by car, it will be better for you. Allah will write down your steps, going to the Masjid and coming back, if you and your intention are sincere. (It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to a man, who was far from the Prophet's Masjid but never missed a Salah with the Prophet (peace be upon him): Why do you not buy a donkey to ride in the heat and the dark night? So he (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I do not like that my home be near the Masjid. I like that

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my steps to the Masjid would be written. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Allah has gathered all that for you.) (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih (book of authentic Hadiths).

Hadith: (The prayer of a neighbor to a Masjid (mosque) is imperfect unless he offers it at the Masjid)

Q: (The prayer of a neighbor of a Masjid (mosque) is imperfect unless he offers it at the Masjid) **Is this saying an authentic Hadith, or a maxim? It includes a strict ruling while our religion is easy and free of extremism. What is your opinion in this regard?**

A: (The prayer of a neighbor of a Masjid (mosque) is imperfect unless he offers it at the Masjid) is narrated by Imam Ahmad, Al-Daraqutny, Al-Hakim, Al-Tabarany, and Al-Daylamy with weak Isnads (chains of transmission) from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah be merciful with him) stated that this Hadith has no established Isnad although it is well-known among people but it is weak according to the view of the people of knowledge. Taking its authenticity for granted, it means that there is no perfect prayer for a person living near a Masjid except in the Masjid. This is because the authentic Hadiths prove the validity of the prayer of a person who offers prayer alone but he will be sinful unless he has a legal excuse, for offering prayer in a Masjid with congregation is obligatory according to other Hadiths

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other than the Hadith at hand. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: (Whoever hears the call (to prayer) and does not reply to it, then he will have no valid Salah unless he has an excuse.) (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni, Ibn Hibban, and Al-Hakim with an Isnad that meets the stipulations of Imam Muslim). Moreover, there is another Hadith where (the Prophet said to a blind man who asked for the Prophet's permission to offer prayer at home and claimed that he has no one to lead him to the mosque, "Do you hear the call (to prayer)?" The man said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said, "Answer it, then.") (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

Is it Obligatory for a Traveler to offer Salah in Congregation?

Q: Mr. M. S. A. from Asyut, Egypt, asks, "If a person wants to travel to a place that is an hour away from the place where he lives by plane, is it permissible for him in this case to combine and shorten prayers while he is in the hotel or the place of residence? Is it permissible for him to break his Fast during Ramadan? Please, advise us!

A: It is not permissible for a resident to shorten prayers unless they are either very ill and it is difficult for them to Fast or they are on a journey.

Moreover, if a person intends to travel, they should not shorten the prayer until they leave the inhabited places of his town, for the Prophet (peace be upon him), when intending to travel, would not shorten prayer until he left Madinah Also, it is not permissible for a person to offer prayer

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alone whether he is on a journey or resident if there is a congregation close to him. He should pray with people and offer complete prayers with them according to the Prophet's saying: ﴾Whoever hears the call (to prayer) and he does not come to it, then there is no (valid) prayer for him unless he has an excuse.﴿ (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni, Ibn Hibban, and Al-Hakim and his Isnad meets the stipulations of Imam Muslim). It was said to Ibn `Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with them): "What is the excuse?" He said: "It is either fear or illness."

﴾A blind man once asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), "O, Allah's Messenger, I have no one to lead me to the mosque. Is there permission for me to offer prayer at home?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do you hear the call to Salah?" He said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said, "Answer it, then."﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I thought of giving orders that the Salah's Iqamah should be declared and a man leads the people in Salah, then I would go with some men carrying bundles of wood to men who neglect [the congregational] Salah and set fire to their house while they are inside them.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Whoever likes to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim, should keep offering these prayers, where the call is announced for them,

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for Allah has laid down for your Prophet the ways of right guidance, and these (prayers) are among the ways of right guidance. If you were to pray in your houses as this man who stays away (from the mosque) prays in his house, you would abandon the Practice of your Prophet, and if you were to abandon the Practice of your Prophet, you would go astray. No man purifies himself well and goes to one of the Masjids but Allah (Exalted be He) records a blessing for him for every step he takes, raising him a degree for it, and erasing a sin from him for it. I have seen the time when no one stayed away from it, except a hypocrite, who was well known for his hypocrisy, or a sick person, whereas a man would be brought swaying (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in a row." (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

There are many Hadiths in this regard. Therefore, every Muslim, whether traveler or resident, should offer prayer in congregation and stay away from offering prayer alone, if he hears the call to prayer. May Allah grant us success!

Permissibility of refraining from Congregational Salah for a Shar`y excuse

Q: I live with my father, my wife and my two kids. One day, my father ordered me to attend Congregational Salah (Prayer) at the Masjid (mosque), but my wife pleaded with me not to

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go out except after my father came back home for she fears to be alone at home. When my father came back home, he asked me why I did not go to the Masjid and I told him what happened. So he pleaded with me not to go to the Masjid and to offer Salah at home. I told him that offering Salah at the Masjid is better than observing it at home and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The Salah of a person who lives near a Masjid will only be valid if offered at the Masjid﴿ **Nevertheless, he insisted that I should offer Salah at home and threatened not to let me in if I went out. I obeyed his order, given that my wife always complains about staying alone at home. Please guide me, my Allah reward you well!**

A: If there is some danger to your wife (at home) and she is not safe, and she is surrounded by things which give rise to fear, then you are excused for praying at home because of your fear for your wife. However, if the surrounding place is safe and there is no reason for your wife's fear, then you should offer Salah at the Masjid and obey your father in kindness. Rather, you should obey Allah before your father and offer congregational Salah with fellow Muslims at the Masjid. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and does not come to it, then there is no (reward for the) Salah for him except with an excuse."﴿ It was reported that: ﴾"A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to take me to the Masjid. Do I have a Rukhsah (concession) to perform Salah in my house?" He asked him, "Can you hear the call to Salah?"

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He said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said, "Then respond (to it)."﴿

The Messenger (peace be upon him) ordered the blind man who has no one to guide him to offer Salah at the Masjid and did excuse him. So you are more entitled to offer it at the Masjid and should not obey your father in any matter that contradicts the Shari`ah (Islamic law). The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Submission is obligatory only in what is good (and reasonable).﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾There is no obedience to a creature in disobedience to the Creator.﴿ However, if your wife is not safe and the place is unsecure, and danger is present, then it is permissible for you to offer Salah at home; this is a Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse.

With regards to the Hadith that reads: ﴾The Salah of a person who lives near a Masjid will only be valid if offered at the Masjid,﴿ , this is a Da`if (weak) Hadith and is not reported by the Prophet (peace be upon him); it is attributed to `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said what is sufficient, i.e. the two Hadiths mentioned above ﴾Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and does not come to it,

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then there is no (reward for the) Salah for him except with an excuse."﴿ There is the Hadith of the story of the blind man with the Prophet to whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Then respond (to it)." These two Sahih (authentic) Hadiths should replace the Hadith: ﴾The Salah of a person who lives near a Masjid will only be valid if offered at the Masjid﴿

What is meant is that it is an obligation upon all male Muslims to offer Salah at the Masjid, increase the numbers of Muslims, and not imitate the actions of the hypocrites. Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I saw the time when no one stayed away from it (i.e., congregational Salah) except a hypocrite whose hypocrisy is evident." The Prophet (peace be upon him) was about to burn the houses of those who would not go to perform congregational Salah.

It is incumbent upon you, as well as upon every able Muslim to offer Salah at the Masjid; for a Muslim is not allowed to pray at home unless he has a Shar`y excuse.

Q: A questioner from Bahrain says: We have an orchard that is 20 or 30 kilometers away. I go there with my brother after `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and we offer Maghrib prayer there. Sometimes, I am the Imam for my brother and sometimes we pray congregationally if some brothers and friends come. I can not go to the Masjid (mosque), for the Masjids

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in the area are occupied by certain groups whom you know. They delay the times of prayers, so we can not go back to our area as our time is limited and we fear the danger of the streets that are crowded by children and cars. Yet, if I go out for prayer by half an hour before its due time, I would come to the Masjid on time. But if I do this, I would not be able to supervise the laborers and they are dishonest Sikh people. Is my prayer correct? What is the ruling on non-Muslim workers?

Answer: If the matter as you have mentioned, then there is no harm in you offering prayers in the orchard with your brother and whoever attends it. Regarding offering prayers with the people of innovations in religion, you should not offer prayers with them as they are not apt to be your Imams and you are not able to be their Imam.Yet, if it is possible for you to be their Imam, there would be no blame on you. The Imam from among the people of innovations in religion should not be an Imam for Ahl-ul-Sunnah (those adhering to the Sunnah). However, there is no blame in offering Maghrib or `Isha' in the orchard with whoever attends, for you are far from the Masjids of Ahl-ul-Sunnah (those adhering to the Sunnah). Regarding the existence of Sikh workers, you should employ Muslims as your country, Bahrain, is part of the Arabian Peninsula. The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded us to drive the disbelievers out of it. I advise you to bring Muslim laborers and stay away from

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hiring the disbelieving laborers of the Sikhs, Christians, Hindus, or others. Our duty is to keep the disbelievers away and bring Muslims closer to work in Muslim countries, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded us to keep the disbelievers away from it. While he was on his deathbed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded Muslims to drive the disbelievers out of this Island.

O brothers, you should employ Muslims everywhere and avoid hiring the disbelievers. This advice is not confined to you, for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) advice is directed to all the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula in Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Emirates, Yemen, and every place of the Arabian Peninsula. It is a duty to drive the disbelievers away and bring Muslim workers. The Muslims are more worthy of receiving benefits and money from you than the disbelievers. However, if Allah (Exalted be He) guides any of the disbelievers to accept Islam through you, then it is permissible to allow them to stay. It is also permissible to bring the disbelievers to this Peninsula for a certain temporary benefit as considered by those in charge and as stated by scholars. May Allah guide us all!

Does abandoning Congregational Prayers result in the loss of blessings?

Q: Is it true that abandoning Prayers in Congregation results in the loss of blessings in one's affairs and properties?

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Answer: There is no doubt that Salah is the pillar of Islam and the greatest of all duties and obligations after the two Shahadah (Testimonies of Faith). There are many verses and authentic Hadiths related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) which lay emphasis on this fact. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)].﴿ Allah (m He be Exalted) also says: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾and perform As-Salât (Iqamât-as-Salât). Verily, As-Salât (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshâ' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed)﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ Until Allah's saying: ﴾And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawât (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours).﴿ ﴾These are indeed the inheritors﴿ ﴾Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât﴿ So Allah (Exalted be He) makes Salah associated with Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/ monotheism).

Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾But if they repent﴿ [i.e. from Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship].

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﴾But if they repent and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât, then leave their way free.﴿ This indicates the importance of Salah and that it is associated with Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/monotheism). Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾But if they repent, perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât, then they are your brethren in religion.﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I have been commanded to fight against people until they testify that there is none to be worshipped but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, perform the Prayer, and pay Zakah. If they do that, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on my behalf except when justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

One of the most important and greatest duties of Salah is that it has to be performed in congregation on the part of males. Allah (Exalted be He) makes the observance of Salah an obligation, even at the times of war and fear. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾When you (O Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) are among them, and lead them in As-Salât (the prayer), let one party of them stand up [in Salât (prayer)] with you taking their arms with them; when they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear﴿

Allah (Exalted be He) ordains Congregational Prayer even at the time of fear and when Muslims come to confront their enemies at wars. Allah commands Muslims to offer Salah congregationally and to bear their arms,

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so that the enemy would not attack them.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it will have no perfect Salah unless [legally] excused."﴿ ﴾A blind man once came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said to him, "O Prophet of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid. Can you grant me permission to perform Salah (prayer) at home?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him, "Do you hear the call for prayer?" The man replied, "Yes." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Then you should answer it."﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not give him permission to abandon the Congregational Prayer. According to another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I do not find a concession for you". So he said it explicitly that there is no concession even for this blind man who finds no companion to guide him to the Masjid.

If the blind man, who has no companion to lead him to the Masjid, has no concession to abandon Congregational Prayer in the mosque, how would the matter be with a person who is sound and healthy? For this kind of men, the matter will be serious and they will incur more sins. Abandoning Congregational Prayer is one of the dangerous means that lead to neglecting and abandoning Salah. Today, a person might abandon Congregational Prayer and tomorrow he would abandon it altogether. Giving little care to Salah makes one abandon Congregational Prayer at the Mosques which are the Houses of Allah. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾In houses (mosques) which Allâh has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honoured), in them His Name is remembered [i.e. Adhan, Iqamah, Salât (prayers), invocations, recitation of the Qur'ân, etc.].﴿ These houses are the "mosques" and this is a well known matter.

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Those who abandon Congregational Prayer will find it easy to abandon Salah without the least excuse and for the most trivial reason. Later on, such persons would abandon Salah altogether as they do not care much for it.

Abandoning Salah in Congregation is a known pretext for abandoning the obligation of Salah altogether. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it becomes a disbeliever.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad and by Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y, and Ibn Majah with good chains of narration. from Buraydah ibn Al-Hasib (may Allah be pleased with him).

Imam Muslim also related in his Sahih from Jabir ibn `Abdullah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾That which admits man to disbelief and polytheism is the abandonment of Salah (prayer).﴿ This indicates that the abandonment of Salah (prayer) is a major disbelief, for the disbelief is expressed with the definite article. Other scholars are in the view that this is a minor disbelief unless one claims that Salah is not obligatory in Islam. But the most correct opinion, which is supported by evidence, is that it is a major disbelief. This view is unanimously agreed upon by the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

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`Abdullah ibn Shaqiq Al-`Uqayly, the honorable Tabi`y (one of the Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet) related that the Prophet's Companions did not see abandonment of anything as disbelief except for the abandonment of prayer, i.e., major disbelief. The commitment of some things is considered a disbelief but not a major disbelief, such as reviling one's genealogies and wailing over the dead. The Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as the Companions called it a disbelief but it is a minor one. So, when the Companions said they see nothing as disbelief but the abandonment of prayer, it is known from this that it is major disbelief as indicated in the Hadith.

It is not strange to say that this sin results in the obliteration of blessings and causes great evils to one's body and conducts. It is known that sins result in great misfortune and bad consequences to one's psyche, heart, conduct, and livelihood. There are many evidence that point out that sins have bad consequences.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in the authentic Hadith: ﴾A man is deprived of provision for a sin he commits.﴿ It is known that committing sins cause barrenness and drought and incur hardships. Such things come as a result of committing sins. Allah (may he be Exalted) says:

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﴾And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much. (See the Qur'ân Verse 35:45).﴿ Allah (may he be Exalted) says: ﴾Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allâh, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself.﴿

It is a well known matter by means of evidence and reality. Hence, Muslims should take care of the bad consequences which result from committing sins, shun away from them, and take care to perform Allah's Obligations and hasten in doing good deeds. Committing good deeds is much better for people in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. On the other hands, sins incur evil in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. May Allah provide us all with health and safety!

Every Muslim should

answer the call to prayer whenever they hear it

Q: I was a guest at some brothers' house. When the time of the `Asr (afternoon) prayer was due, I asked them about the nearby Masjid (mosque) and whether it is close to them or not. They told me that it is a little bit far and added that it is better to pray congregationally at home. However, I was afraid that the Masjid might be close and that it was in my capacity to go to observe prayer in congregation there. I also feared that my brothers would separate where some of them would come with me to the Masjid and others would stay at home. So I performed the prayer with them at home and I was their Imam. Based on the fact that the room in which we performed prayer was narrow, one of them stood to my right side.

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Is our prayer valid in this way? If it is invalid, should I repeat this prayer only or all the prayers which I performed after this one? Please, advise me. May Allah reward you!

Answer: Your prayer in this manner is valid. If the Masjid was so far to the extent that they did not hear the Mu'adhin (caller to prayers), they would be permitted to perform prayer in their house. But if they hear the Adhan (call to prayer) without a microphone, they should go to the mosque as the Prophet (peace be upon) him said: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he is excused.)

Hence, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to answer the call to prayer whenever he hears it. Yet, if he does not hear it except from a microphone, it would not be obligatory upon him to go to the Masjid. However, it would be much better for him to go and observe prayer in the mosque.

Q: Brother A. M. Z. from Al-Bahah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia says: I visited a sick person who could not offer Salah (Prayer) at the Masjid (mosque). When it was time for an obligatory Prayer, he asked me to do him a favor and offer Salah with him, not at the Masjid. Is it permissible for me to do so? May Allah benefit us!

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A: You should offer Salah in congregation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Anyone who hears the call (to Salah) and does not respond to it, there is no Salah for him except with an excuse.) When Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked about the excuse, he said, "Fear or sickness." A sick person has an excuse that permits him to offer Salah at home and he receives the full reward as if he was performing it in congregation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (When a servant of Allah is ill or on a journey, they are recorded with the equal of what they used to do when they were healthy or at home.) (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith) May Allah guide us all!

Q: What is your advice to our fellow Muslims who offer prayers in their places and at work?

Answer: Whoever hears the call to prayer has to answer it. The Muslims have to answer the call to prayer unless there is an acceptable Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse. It is authentically reported that: ﴾A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid (mosque). He, therefore, asked Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) to give him permission to offer prayer in his house. He (the Prophet) called him and said: Do you hear the call to prayer? He said: "Yes." He (the Prophet) said: Respond to it.﴿

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This is the case with a blind man whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) answered saying: "Respond to it." According to another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I do not find a concession for you."

So Muslims have to perform Prayers in Congregation in Masjids and whoever delays it without an acceptable Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse will be like the hypocrites. Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Whoever wants to meet Allah while he is a Muslim has to hold fast to these prayers when he hears the call to them. Indeed, Allah (peace be upon him) decreed for His Messengers the paths of guidance. Prayers are from these paths. If you perform prayers at homes as the one who performs it at home, you do then abandon your Prophet's tradition and if you abandon your Prophet's tradition, you shall go astray. According to another narration: "You will be disbelievers." I saw us, i.e., Muslims, when no one would abandon it but someone who is notorious for his hypocrisy. According to another narration: 'Or someone who is sick."'

This is `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, one of the greatest Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. He says that the hypocrites or sick people are the only ones who abandon congregational prayers. This indicates that believers should do their best to perform prayers and be aware of the attributes of the hypocrites. May Allah guide us all!

Q: Mr. S. M. M. from Tanta, Arab Republic of Egypt, says, "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) says: ﴾ Whoever hears the call (to prayer) and does not respond to it, there is no (valid) prayer for him unless he has an excuse. ﴿ O our Shaykh! time has changed and loudspeakers are used in Masjids (mosques) and its sound reaches very far distances.

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Does the Hadith mean those who hear the call to prayer without loudspeakers or what is the intended meaning? Is there an estimated distance in meters or kilometers for this? Please, give us a fatwa! May Allah reward you well!

A: The Hadith means hearing the voice of the caller without loudspeakers in a time when it is quiet and there is nothing that may restrain the voice. This can be recognized through continued habit in case when there is no restraint.

However, a believer should do their best and be cautious about the matter of their religion through observing congregation and joining their Muslim brothers in this great worship. This comes in accordance with Allah's sayings: ﴾Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)].﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever observes offering prayer, it will be a light, evidence, and rescue for them on the Day of Resurrection and whoever neglects it, they will have no light, evidence, or rescue on the Day of Resurrection and they will be gathered on the Day of Judgment with Fir `awn (Pharaoh), Haman, Qarun (Korah), and Ubay ibn Khalaf." ﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad with a good Isnad "chain of transmission"). It is reported in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that:

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﴾A blind man said, "O Allah's Messenger, I have no one to lead me to the Masjid (mosque)." He, therefore, asked Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) to give him permission to offer prayer in his house. He (the Prophet) called to him and said: Do you hear the call to prayer? He said: 'Yes'. He (the Prophet) said: 'Respond to it.'"﴿

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim as well from `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: "Whoever likes to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim should offer Salah when the call is announced. Indeed Allah has laid down for your Prophet the paths of right guidance. This prayer is among the paths of right guidance. If you were to offer prayer at home as this man who stays away from the Masjid (mosque) offers prayer at home, you would abandon the tradition of your Prophet. If you were to abandon the tradition of your Prophet, you would go astray. I have seen a time when no one abandoned it except a hypocrite or a sick person. A man would be brought swaying (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in a row.

There are many Hadiths that assure this meaning. May Allah guide all Muslims to what pleases Him, for He is the Bestower of Good and the Most Generous!

Q: `A. S. S, from Riyadh, says: I know some people who reside near the Masjid (mosque) and hear the call to prayer, yet they do not come to observe Prayers in Congregation therein. Are they to blame for they hear the call to prayer and do not come to the mosque? Is it obligatory upon us to advise those who do not offer prayers with their fellow Muslims in congregation? If we do not advise them, do we incur a sin? What is the role of the Imam

of the Masjid (mosque) and the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) in (their place? Please, give us your Fatwa. May Allah reward you.

Answer: It is obligatory upon anyone who hears the Adhan (call to Prayer) through the normal voice, without a microphone, to respond and come to offer prayer at the Masjid (mosque) from which they hear the Adhan (the call to Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has a legal excuse.") (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni, Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim with a good chain of transmission). When Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was asked about the nature of the excuse, he said: "It is either fear or sickness." It is related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) (that: (A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid (mosque). He, therefore, asked Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) to give him permission to offer prayer in his house. He (the Prophet) called him and said: Do you hear the call to prayer? He said: 'Yes'. He (the Prophet) said: Respond to it.")

It is also related in Sahih Muslim from Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: "Whoever wants to meet Allah while he is a Muslim has to observe these prayers carefully when their call is announced. Indeed, Allah (Exalted be He) decreed for His Messenger the paths of guidance and prayers are from these paths. If you perform prayers at homes as the one who performs it at home, you will abandon your Prophet's tradition

and if you abandon your Prophet's tradition, you will go astray. We lived during a time during which no one would abandon Salah but someone who is notorious for being a hypocrite or someone who is sick. We used to see the sick man swaying while supported by two men until he was set up in a row". It is also related in Al-Bukhari and Muslim that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (I had thought of ordering that wood be gathered, then I would command the call to prayer to be given, and I would appoint a man to lead the people in prayer, then I would go to men [who do not attend the congregational prayer] and burn their houses down around them.)

There are many Hadiths that point out the greatness of Salah and urge people to perform it at Masjids (mosques). It is obligatory upon Muslims to observe Salah carefully in the Masjids, advise one another and cooperate in doing so. In addition, the Imam and Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) have to encourage people to observe Prayers in Congregation. The ruler or guardian should also punish whoever does not perform prayer in the Masjid through what can deter them. This is due to the fact that Salah is the pillar of Islam, the greatest of all its rituals, and the best of its pillars after the two Shahadah (Two Testimonies). Hence, whoever holds fast to it holds fast to Islam and whoever neglects it will neglect so many other religious obligations. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is the performance of Salah. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever.)

He (peace be upon him) also said: (That which admits man to disbelief and polytheism is the abandonment of Salah (prayer).) Imam Ahmad related in his Musnad with a good chain of narration from `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Whoever observes offering prayer, it will be a light, evidence, and rescue for them on the Day of Resurrection and whoever neglects it, they will have no light, evidence, or rescue on the Day of Resurrection and they will be gathered on the Day of Judgment with Fir`awn (Pharaoh), Haman, Qarun (Korah), and Ubay ibn Khalaf." ) `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to write to his governors in all provinces saying: "The most important thing for me is Salah. Whoever holds fast to it, protects his religion and whoever neglects it will, with greater possibility, neglect every religious obligation, i.e., that is not equal in importance to Salah.

As for those who are away from the Masjid (mosque) and do not hear the call to prayer but only through a microphone, it is not obligatory upon them to come to the mosque. It is permissible for them to pray with a group in their own places as indicated by the mentioned above Hadiths. Yet, if they bear the hardship to come to perform prayers with their fellow Muslims in congregation in the Masjids (mosques) from which they do not hear the call to prayer but with a microphone, they would receive a greater reward. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The people who will earn the greatest

reward for Salah are those who walk the farthest to reach it (the Masjid), then the next farthest and so on.)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (If one performs Wudu' (ablution) in his home, and then goes out to pray, for each step he takes towards the Masjid (mosque), Allah upgrades him a degree in reward and (forgives) crosses out one of his sins.) According to another narration by Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him): (Allah upgrades him a degree in reward, crosses out (forgives) one of his sins, and records a good deed for him.)

It is also related in Sahih Muslim that: (There was a man living far away from the Prophet's Mosque. Then, some of his friends advised him to buy a donkey so as to ride it to avoid the hot whether and during the dark nights. The man refused their suggestion and said: "I like that Allah records my steps to and from the Masjid (mosque) as good deeds. Upon hearing his statement, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah (may He be Exalted) has gathered all that reward for him.")

There are many Hadiths that point out the excellence of going to Masjids and encourage Muslims to adhere to this good deed. May Allah guide us all!

Offering Salah (prayer) in the Workplace

Q: Brother `A. M. from Al-Ras, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia says: We are a group of employees working in a governmental department including about thirty employees. We offer prayers in an area that the department specified for Prayer. The manager of the department leads in Prayer. Some of our colleagues do not offer prayers with us but go to a Masjid (mosque) which is about three hundred meters away from our workplace. What is the right deed: Should we pray in the specified area or go with the group to offer Prayers in the Masjid, keeping in mind that the person in charge says that if we go to the Masjid, we might come late to work. Please, give us your Fatwa, may Allah reward you well!

Answer: You should offer prayers at the Masjid with your Muslim brothers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has a legal excuse.,) It was said to Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) - the narrator of this Hadith-: 'What is the nature of the excuse? He said: "It is either fear or sickness". (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni, Ibn Hibban, and Al-Hakim with a good chain of narration that meets the stipulations of Imam Muslim).

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was (asked by a blind man who had no one to lead him to the Masjid (mosque) if he has any concession to pray in his house, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Do you hear the call to Salah (prayer)?" He said: "Yes." He said: "Then, answer it.")

Reported by Muslim in his Sahih. There are many Hadiths that assure this meaning. May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him!

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His Highness Shaykh `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, **the General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia... As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)**

Q: We would like to infrom you that we are a group of employees working in a governmental department where a Masjid (mosque) is close to us at a distance of 30 meters across the street. We clearly hear the Adhan (call to Prayer) but we offer prayers in an area specified for prayer in the office. We have perused the Fatwa issued by the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Researches and Ifta'. Attached to Your Highness with this letter is a copy of this Fatwa , that says that it is not permissible to offer Salah inside a governmental department that is close to a Masjid (mosque) and that employees should go to offer prayers at the Masjid.

The question: Is it permissible for us to offer prayer in our office congregationally? Must we go to the Masjid? Is it permissible for our office manager to obligate us to offer prayers in our office while there is no an acceptable legal excuse to do that? Please, advise us. May Allah sustain and protect you from all evils!

Best Wishes The Employees

Answer: Wa `Alikum Asalamu Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatu.

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You and your manager should go to offer prayers at the Masjid. It is not permissible for you to abandon it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has a legal excuse.) When Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked about the nature of the excuse, he said: "It is either fear or sickness." It is authentically reported that: (A blind man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying: O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid. He, therefore, asked Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) to give him permission to offer prayer in his house. He (the Prophet) called him and said: 'Do you hear the call to prayer?' He said: 'Yes.' He (peace be upon him) then said: Then respond to it.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him), the Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "We lived during a time when no one would fall behind the congregational Salah but a well known hypocrite or a sick person...")Hence, you all should hold fast to offer prayers in Masjids with your fellow Muslims and should not be like the hypocrites who are the Enemies of Allah. May Allah guide you and make matters easy for you! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

The General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

`Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

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Q: We live far away from the village's Masjid (mosque) but we offer prayers in a place, which we specified for Salah (prayer). Are we to blame for not going to the village's Masjid?

Answer: If you hear the call to prayer when it is announced in the natural voice without a microphone, i.e., you are close to the Masjid, then you have to go to the Masjid and offer prayers there. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has a legal excuse.") (Once a blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: "O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid. May I perform Salah at home?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Do you hear the Adhan (call to Salah)?" He said: "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said: "Answer it, then.")

You have to offer prayers congregationally at the Masjid, if you hear the call to prayer and you are able to go there. But if the Masjid is far away and it is hard to go there as a matter of distance or because of sickness, old age, or the like, then there is no blame on you to offer prayer in your workplace.

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Allah (Exalted be He) says: (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can)

To conclude, you have to offer prayers congregationally at the Masjid as long as you hear the usual call to prayer when there is no noise. Then you have to go there but if the Masjid is far away; it is hard to go there and you do not hear the call to prayer, then it is permissible to offer prayer in your house and there is no blame on you in doing so.

Q: Although several Masjids are near the hospital, a number of congregations are formed for offering prayer at the hospital. Is it an obligation to offer prayer at the Masjid? Can these congregations held inside the hospital be sufficient?

Answer: The issue in question requires some explanation: for those who must be present at the hospital, such as guards, patients, or the ones who are unable to go to the Masjid, it is not obligatory upon them to go to the Masjid. They may then offer prayers in their place with any congregation they find. As for those who are able to go to the Masjid, then they must go in compliance with the legal evidence. Among these evidence is the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has a legal excuse.") When 'Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) was asked about the nature of the legal excuse, he said: It is either fear or sickness. (Related by Ibn Majah and Al-Daraqutni. Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim classed it as authentic. Indeed, its chain of transmission is reliable).

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Q: A brother from Yanbu` Al-Bahr, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, submits the following question: If a man misses the Congregational Salah (Prayer) in the Masjid (Mosque), then returns home and leads his wife in Salah, will he still be rewarded for Congregational Prayer? Please advise me, may Allah extend your life in obeying Him!

A: It is obligatory upon the believer to hasten to Congregational Salah in the Masjid. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr).) and: (And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.) He (Exalted be He) also says: (Successful indeed are the believers.) (Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.) (And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawât (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours).) (These are indeed the inheritors) (Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.)

Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever hears the Adhan (call to Prayer) and does not respond, his Salah is rejected unless he is excused") Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked: "What is a valid excuse?" He replied: "It is either fear or illness."

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It was related in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that: ("A blind man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying, "O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid," and asked for a Rukhsah (concession) to perform Salah in his house, he (peace be upon him) asked, "Do you hear the Adhan?" He said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said: "Then respond (to it).")

There are many Hadiths that point out and lay emphasis on this meaning. However, there is no harm if a person misses the Congregational Salah and leads his wife in Salah as they will be rewarded if he has a legal excuse. The wife should not stand beside him, but she should stand behind him.

Delaying Fajr Prayer beyond the due time is a great sin

Q: There is a person who holds fast to all prayers except Fajr (dawn) prayer. He offers Fajr prayer whenever he gets up but does not offer it at the Masjid (mosque). Is this permissible? Please, supplicate to Allah to guide him to hold fast to this prayer particularly and to all religious obligations generally.

Answer: This is a great disaster that afflicted many people. Many of them stay up at night watching TV or other things and when the time of Fajr prayer is due, they go to sleep and do not get up to offer this prayer. This is a great sin and any Muslim should not

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commit it. If a Muslim does this deliberately, he will be in a great danger as some scholars say whoever does this is a disbeliever as he abandons offering this prayer on its due time deliberately. In the authentic Hadith, the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, ﴾That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it becomes a disbeliever.﴿ Reported by Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with a good chain of narration.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandoning prayers.﴿ Reported by Muslim.

So those who stay up at nights have to fear Allah and sleep earlier to be able to offer prayers with the congregation in Fajr prayer. For those who delay the prayer until they finish their worldly jobs and then offer the prayer after the sun rises, this is a great sin that incurs deterrent punishment. They should be asked to repent; if they refuse to repent, they should be killed for this act. Those in charge should invite them to repent and if they refuse to repent they should kill them for their disbelief or for the execution of the Had (ordained punishment for violating Allah's Law) according to the two views among the scholars.

This is a grave sin that afflicted many people. It is a result of staying up at night and neglect to sleep early. When the time of prayer is due, those people are like the dead and unable to get up. That is not a legal excuse for them, as they should fear Allah, sleep early, and use alarm clocks to wake them up at Fajr prayers due time. They may seek the help of

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any person in their family or others to wake them up and offer prayer with the people. It is not permissible for them to offer prayer at homes or after the sun rises, all this is Haram (prohibited) and a sin, which they should not do. They should get up and offer prayer at Masjids. They should not delay it to offer at home even during the due time. It is not permissible for them to delay it until the sun rises, as this is more abhorrent and ugly. May Allah provide us with safety and health! May Allah guide the questioner, others, and make them prosper!

Q: A questioner says: Some nights, I sleep late out of tiredness and fatigue, and hence I can not offer Fajr prayer but at home, is this permissible? Another person wants you to give advice to those who are too lazy to attend Fajr Prayer in congregation at the Masjid (mosque)?

Answer: It is obligatory upon every Mukallaf men (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) to offer the five daily prayers at the Masjid with his Muslim brothers. It is not permissible to be flexible with this matter or to abandon Fajr prayer as these would be considered attributes of hypocrisy. Allah (May He be exalted) says, ﴾Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allâh, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for As-Salât (the prayer), they stand with laziness﴿

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The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the `Isha' (night) prayer and the Fajr (dawn) prayer. If they were to know the blessings they have in store, they would have come to them, even though crawling.﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾"Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and does not come to it, then there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has an excuse.﴿ Reported by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni, and Al-Hakim with an authentic chain of narration.

﴾A blind man once came to him (peace be upon him) and said, "O Prophet of Allah, I have no one to guide me to the Masjid. May I perform Salah at home?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do you hear the Adhan (call to Salah)?" He said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said, "Answer it, then."﴿ Reported by Muslim in his Sahih. So if the blind man who has no guide to lead him has no excuse to abandon congregational prayer, then others who have no excuse are by the same token denied any permission.

You should fear Allah (May He be exalted) and hold fast to Fajr Prayer and other prayers in congregation. You have to sleep early enough so that you can get up to offer Fajr prayer, for it is not permissible for you to offer prayer at home unless you have a reasonable legal excuse such as fear or sickness.

May Allah guide us all to hold fast to what is right!

Q: Neglect of many Muslims to offer the Fajr Prayer and people's carelessness about condemning this act. What is your advice? May Allah reward you!

Answer: A Muslim has to advise his brother, if he sees him abandoning Fajr or other prayers. Neighbors should advise one another and also the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) and Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) should advise people. We should not leave a person who abandons prayer without advising them. For example, brothers should go to this brother and advise him saying we did not see you today, two days, or three days ago. We were afraid lest you should have any physical problems. He should be advised in this manner so that he might respond; otherwise the matter should be reported to the concerned authorities.

Fearing to look at women

is not a legal excuse to abandon congregational prayers

Q: When I advise young men to perform prayers, most of them say that they can not go to perform prayers, for they look at women, especially those dressed immodestly. Does looking at women render one's prayers null or prevent a person from performing it?

Answer: This is a false excuse; they should offer prayers with Muslims and hold fast to the prayers which Allah made obligatory.

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They have to lower their gaze. Offering prayers at Masjids (mosques) is obligatory, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) says: ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and does not come to it, there is no (reward for) his Salah unless he has a legal excuse.") Salah is the pillar of Islam, so Muslims should offer it if they are Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions). Abandoning prayer is an act of disbelief in Allah and a form of deviation.

Seeing women in the streets or at Masjids when they offer prayers is not an excuse for anyone to abandon prayer or congregational prayer. This is wrong and an abhorrent act. It is like justifying what is wrong (abandoning prayer) depending on false evidence. May Allah save us. All Muslims have to lower their gaze and fear Allah in markets and everywhere. It is not an excuse to abandon prayer if one sees women in the street. In this case, one has only to lower his gaze and struggle to do that. Allah (May he be exalted) says, (Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allâh is All-Aware of what they do.)

Muslims have to lower their gaze fearing Allah, protect their private parts from illegal sexual acts, and perform the prayer that Allah made obligatory in Allah's Masjids with Muslims out of fearing Allah and hoping for His Mercy. Allah (May He be exalted) says, (In houses (mosques) which Allâh has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honoured), in them His Name is remembered [i.e. Adhan, Iqamah, Salât (prayers), invocations, recitation of the Qur'ân, etc.].) The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, (Whoever

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hears the call to prayer and does not respond - shall not have the reward of prayer unless he has an excuse) Referring to the lofty status and greatness of Salah, the Prophet said, (That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever.) Reported by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with a good chain of narration. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandoning prayers.) Reported by Muslim in his Sahih.

There are other Hadiths that indicate the greatness of prayer. For example, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, (The peak of the matter is Islam and the pillar is Salah.) The Prophet (peace be and blessings upon him) was about to set fire to the houses of those who fell behind in the congregational prayers.

Therefore, every Muslim man and woman has to fear Allah and hold fast to the prayers at their due times, and beware of abandoning them. The abandonment of prayers is one of the attributes of hypocrites and disbelievers, and a way to hellfire. In His Holy Book, Allah (May He be exalted) says about disbelievers: ("What has caused you to enter Hell?") (They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer the Salât (prayers),) They replied that the cause that made them enter hellfire is that they were not among the worshippers who observed prayers. May Allah save us!

Believers have to fear Allah in everything, lower their gaze, and protect their private parts

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from committing what Allah forbids. They should perform what Allah made obligatory such as Salah (prayers), Zakah (obligatory charity), dutifulness to parents, maintaining the ties of kinship, etc. They should work for this and that; this world is the place of undertaking deeds and duties, trials and tests. Thus, every Muslim man and woman has to fear Allah, hold fast to what Allah made obligatory, stay away from what Allah forbade, and stay away from Allah's restrictions fearing Allah, expecting His Reward, and fearing His Punishment. Humans and Jinn are created for that purpose. Allah (May He be exalted) says, (And I (Allâh) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).)

Worship refers to Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/monotheism), Salah (prayers), Zakah (obligatory charity), Sawm (fasting), Hajj, Jihad, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong, inviting to Allah, being grateful to parents, maintaining the ties of kinship, etc., in addition to abstaining from what Allah forbids. This abstention is an act of worship and obedience to Allah. It is one of the best things that make a person close to Allah.

Congregational Salah is not obligatory upon women

Q: We are more than six ladies living in the same house. When the times of obligatory prayers are due, we offer prayer individually. Some of our relatives visited us and advised us to perform prayer congregationally and explained to us

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that in this way we get the virtue of offering prayer in congregation. Is this correct?

Answer: It is not obligatory upon women to perform prayer in congregation but if they offer it congregationally, it will be correct and if they offer it individually, it will be also correct. We expect that Allah will give them the full reward of congregation, if they offer it congregationally, especially if there is a religious female student that would be their Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to lead them. When they offer prayer in congregation, it will be cooperation in virtue and piety. Their female Imam has to stand in the middle of them in the first row and recite the Qur'an loudly exactly as men do.

Q: What is the ruling on observing congregational Salah by women in schools? Please, advise!

Answer: It is not obligatory upon women to pray in a congregation but if they do so, it will be correct so that they might learn and benefit from one another. It is reported that Um Salamah and 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with them) acted as Imams of some women.

The virtue and merit of this act is evident to all, especially when there is a woman among them who is well qualified in religious knowledge to benefit and teach them how to offer prayers. She has to stand in the middle of them, not in front and to recite the Qur'an loudly in Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) as this is preferred, not obligatory, because the congregational prayer is obligatory only on men in Allah's Houses

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as indicated by the legal evidence. As for women, their prayers in their houses are better for them whether individually or congregationally.

Q: Is it better for women to offer prayers individually or congregationally?

Answer: Both are permissible; if a woman prays alone it is true and if she prays in congregation with other women, it is right because the matter is flexible. At the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), women offered prayers individually but whenever there was a group of women, they offered it in congregation at home and the best among them acted as their Imam, that is good. It is narrated that Um Salamah and `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with them) led women sometimes.

To conclude, a woman may offer prayers in congregation and their female Imam should stand in their midst; some women stand at her right and others at her left. She has to say Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest) and recite the Qur'an loudly at the time of Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) such as Maghrib (sunset), Isha' (night), and Fajr (dawn) prayers. She has to do like men do; say Allahu Akbar, raise her hand parallel to her shoulders, and say after Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"): "Glory be to You, O Allah. Praise be to You. Blessed is Your Name and Exalted is Your Greatness. None has the right to be worshipped but You" or pronounce some of the authentic Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplications when starting the Prayer) said by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). She should then say: 'I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Satan' and

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recite Basmalah (saying, "Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]"), Surah Al-Fatihah, and a Surah and do the same in the second unit of Maghrib and `Isha' prayer. As for the third and fourth units, she has to recite Al-Fatihah only and in Fajr prayer she has to recite Al-Fatihah and some verses of the Qur'an as much as possible but recite longer than the recitation of `Isha' and Maghrib prayers. In Zhuhr and `Asr prayers, she has to lead them in prayer and read subvocally without audible recitation. In short, she offers the prayer as the male Imam does but she has to stand in the middle of them.

Women's Salah in the Masjid (mosque)

Q: A woman asks: Is it permissible for a woman to perform prayer at the Masjid (mosque) if she is decently wearing full Hijab (veil) and using no perfume or make-up? She just seeks to please Allah (May He be exalted) with this act but her husband does not agree. Please, advise. May Allah reward you!

Answer: It is permissible for women to offer prayers at the Masjids while they are decently wearing full Hijab and wearing no perfumes. It is not permissible for husbands to prevent them from doing that, if they abide by the Islamic ethics as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ﴾Do not forbid the female Servants of Allah from (going into) the Masjids of Allah﴿ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, ﴾If

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any of your wives asks for permission to offer prayers at Masjids, do not prevent them.﴿ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

So if women go to the Masjid in a decent way wearing the full Hijab without putting any perfumes, no one should blame them even if her husband does not agree as indicated by the above mentioned two Hadiths. However, if they offer prayers at home and do not go out so as not to upset their husbands and stay away from the causes of temptations, that will be better. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ﴾Do not forbid the female servants of Allah from (going into) the Masjids of Allah but their houses are better for them.﴿

Is it permissible for women to offer all prayers at the Masjid?

Q: If a young lady wearing the full Islamic Hijab covering all her body except her face and hands wishes to offer all prayers at the Masjid (mosque), is this permissible for her? Should she always go accompanied by her husband?

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Answer: There is nothing wrong with a woman's praying at the Masjid if she wears Islamic Hijab covering all her body, face and hands, and avoids perfumes or adornments. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated: ﴾Do not forbid the female servants of Allah from (going into) the Masjids of Allah.﴿ However, her home is better for her because the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated at the end of the abovementioned Hadith that: ﴾And their houses are better for them.﴿

Ruling on the claim that the congregational Prayer is to be offered behind the regular Imam only

Q: What is the ruling on the claim that congregational Prayers is to be offered behind the regular Imam only?

A: This claim is baseless. However, it is incumbent to hasten to offer Salah behind the regular Imam and should not be late. But, if one for some reason comes to the Masjid (mosque) late and finds another Imam, one must offer Salah behind him hoping all attendees gain the reward of the congregational Prayer according to the generality of the evidence.

The Reprehensibility of attending congregational prayer in a Masjid by one whose body odor is offensive to others

Q: It is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, ﴾He who eats onion, garlic, or leek should not approach our Masjid (mosque) for three days, because the angels are harmed by the same things as the children of Adam.﴿ **or he said something similar (peace and blessings be upon him) to that. Does eating these things make it impermissible to offer prayer at the Masjid till this specified time elapses? Or is eating these things considered impermissible for those who should offer congregational prayer?**

Answer: This Hadith and other similar Hadiths indicate that it is reprehensible to attend congregational prayer if one's odor is offensive and harms others around them; whether due to eating garlic, onions, leek, or other things that emit offensive odor such as smoking till the odor vanishes. It should be known that in addition to emitting a foul odor, smoking is also forbidden. It has many harms and proven malignancies. Thus, it is included in Allah's statement about His Prophet in Surat

Al-`Aaraf: ﴾he allows them as lawful At-Tayyibât (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods), and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khabâ'ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods)﴿ Also, in Surat Al-Ma'dah: ﴾They ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) what is lawful for them (as food). Say: "Lawful unto you are At-Tayyibât [all kind of Halâl (lawful-good) foods which Allâh has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables and fruits)].﴿

It is well known that smoking is not of At-Tayyibât [all kind of Halâl (lawful-good), so it is prohibited. As for the specific period of three days, I do not know any evidence in support of that addition in any authentic Hadith. The ruling is conditional upon the existence of odor, so if it is removed even before three days, there would be no reprehensibility to attend congregational prayer at the Masjid as the ruling follows its cause; whenever the cause exists, the ruling exists; and whenever the cause is removed, the ruling is lifted. If one claims it is prohibited to attend congregational prayer at the Masjid as long as the odor exists, it would be a very strong opinion. This is because the negative command originally implies prohibition and the imperative mode originally implies obligation unless otherwise is proven by evidence. May Allah guide us all!

Q: It is stated in the authentic Hadith that it is forbidden for those who have eaten onion, garlic, or leeks to enter the Masjid, is the same ruling applied to other things that emit offensive odors such as smoking? Does it mean that those who eat these things or smoke are excused for not joining congregational prayer and are not blamed for this?

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Answer: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Whoever eats garlic or onion should keep away from our Masjid and should offer prayer at home.") It is also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated: (The angels are also offended by (the strong smells) that offend humans.)

Anything that has an offensive odor carries the same ruling of garlic and onions such as smoking, or the bad odor of underarm perspiration etc., as it harms one's fellow worshippers. So, it is impermissible for one to offer prayer with a congregation till one removes this offensive odor.

It must be removed as much as possible, so that one may offer obligatory prayers in congregation. As for smoking, it is absolutely prohibited and must be abandoned at all times. It is strongly rejected in Islam as it is detrimental to one's Deen, body, and wealth. May Allah improve the conditions of Muslims and help them achieve all good!

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The rulings of Imamah

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It is prescribed for Imam to

be mindful of the due time of Iqamah

Q: Mr. Kh. `A. M. from Halab, Syria, says, "What is the ruling on offering prayer directly after the Mua'dhin (caller to prayer) finishes Adhan (call to prayer) without any interval between the Adhan and the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer)?

A: The Imam should not hasten; rather he should wait till worshippers come to offer prayer in congregation following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. He is to observe the appropriate time waiting for people to arrive for prayer in congregation. If the Imam is in a place where the times of announcing Iqamah are determined by those in charge, he should abide by that so that his brothers in Islam can offer prayer in congregation. However, if one offers prayer in one's home such as woman and the sick, they are required to wait a little to ensure that the due time of prayer is actually true as some Mu'adhins

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may hasten to announce the Adhan. It is better for every Muslim, male or female, to offer Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) before Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, which is four Rak`ahs separated by Salam (salutation ending prayer) after the second and the fourth Rak`ah. It is recommended to offer before `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer four Rak`ahs ending each two with Salam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾May Allah confer mercy on those who perform four Rak`ahs before `Asr.﴿ It is also prescribed for every Muslim to offer two Rak`ahs between the Adhan of Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and the obligatory prayer of Maghrib according to the Prophet's statement, ﴾"There is between the two calls (Adhan and Iqama) a prayer." He repeated it twice, and in the third time he said, "For those who wish to do it."﴿ It is strongly recommended for men, women, travelers, or residents to offer two Rak`ahs before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, which is Ratibah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer them while on journey or in residence. As for other supererogatory prayers, they should be performed in residence, not during travel, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard.

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It is also recommended for the resident to offer two Rak`ahs after Zhuhr Prayer, Maghrib Prayer, and `Isha' Prayer, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed them when he was resident. These Rak`ahs are called Rawatib (supererogatory acts that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet). They are four Rak`ahs before Zhuhr Prayer and two after it, two after Maghrib Prayer and `Isha' Prayer, and two before Fajr Prayer. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾Whoever offers in a day and a night twelve supererogatory Rak`ahs, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise in return.﴿ Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih on the authority of Umm Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her)." It is also authentically reported that the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever keeps performing four Rak`ahs before Zhuhr Prayer and four after it, Allah will protect him against Hell.﴿ Related by Imam Ahmad and the four Compilers of Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with an authentic Isnad on the authority of Umm Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her). May Allah grant us success!

Encouraging Imams to make prayers light

Q: How do we reconcile the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): (Are you putting the people in a trial, Mu`adh ) **and what is proven that he (peace and blessings be upon him) recited Surat Al-Baqara, Al-`Imran, Al-Ma'idah, Al-`Aaraf, and other Suras?**

Answer: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) encouraged light prayers when one is the Imam who leads people, for he (peace be upon him) stated: (Whoever leads people in prayer should lighten it, because there are among them the young, the aged, the weak, and those who must tend to their affairs. But when offering prayer individually, one may (prolong) it as one pleases.)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) performed the most light and perfect prayer when leading the Muslims in Salah. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (I never offered prayer behind anyone who was more perfect nor lighter in Salah than the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).) Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

But when offering prayer individually, one may prolong it as much as one wishes. As for reciting Al-Baqarah, Al-`Imran, and Al-Nisa', this was in the Prophet's night prayers (peace and blessings be upon him). May Allah grant us all success!

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His Eminence Shaykh `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz (may Allah admit him to the highest place in Paradise). Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

We have a Masjid (mosque) in our district that has no Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), so I volunteered to lead people in Salah (Prayer). But some brothers at the Masjid, may Allah guide them and us, allege that I prolong my Salah. I will describe how I lead them in Salah and if you find that I prolong it, I will not be the Imam any more as I cannot offer Salah lighter than that. I ask that you please direct your advice to this group which I lead in Salah at the Masjid, as they feel I am burdening them and are implying that I should make the Salah brief. My Salah usually takes no less than nine minutes, and if I prolong it, it does not take more than14 minutes as in Fajr (Dawn) Prayer on Friday in which I recite Surat Al-Sajdah and Surat Al-Insan. For the Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]"), I repeat it no more than seven times in Ruku` (bowing) and three times in prostration in addition to the supplication saying: "O Allah, Who relieves us of our worries and calamities, etc.", or "O Allah, guide us to do what is good, etc." For the recitation in Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, I recite about one page and half of the Qur'an in the first two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer).

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Please, advice! I would like also to call to your attention the fact that those who complain are healthy and they spend their time outside the Masjid discussing worldly matters and do not feel tired though they stand there from fifteen or thirty minutes. Allah is the only One to be sought for help. May Allah protect you and make people benefit from you! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

A: Walikum Asalamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh. If the matter is as you mention and the Salah takes no more than fourteen minutes, then it is not considered to be long, but rather light. We advise you to continue and work according to all that you know of Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah help you benefit His servants and help the group do what pleases Him and offer Salah appropriately as required! Indeed, Allah is All-Hearer, Ever Near (to all things). Was-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

The General Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

`Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz

There is nothing wrong if

the Imam stands in a higher position than some of the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer).

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz **to His Eminence, the honorable brother. May Allah protect him!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reply to your question registered with the Department of Scholarly Research and Ifta', No. (682) on 17/2/1457 A.H. in which you ask about the ruling on the Imam being standing in a higher position than the Ma'mums or some of them during Salah (Prayer), there is no harm that the Imam would be in a higher position than some of the Ma'mums in case there are several rows with him in the same location. Moreover, if the Imam is a lone and the level is a little bit higher, there is no harm because (the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Salah on the pulpit, then stepped down and said: "O people, I did so that you would follow me and learn (the manner of) my Salah.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite the Qur'an on the pulpit and perform Ruku` (bowing) on the pulpit then descend

to prostrate on the ground. May Allah guide us all to that which pleases Him! As-Salamu `Alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

Q: `A. M. from Tirana asks: "Is it permissible for the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to stand on a higher level than the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) i.e. the Mihrb (the place where the Imam stands in prayer) being higher than other parts of the Masjid (mosque)?

A: There is no harm if it is slightly higher as the Prophet (peace be upon him) (performed Salah on the Minbar (pulpit), then he stepped down, prostrated, and after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Salah) said: "O people, I did so that you should follow me and learn (the manner of) my Salah.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Therefore, it is absolutely permissible if he has some Ma'mums with him in the same location, as necessity may frequently require it. May Allah grant us all success!

Ruling on being led by an Imam with a lisp

Q: What is the ruling on being led [in prayer. Ed.] by an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) with a lisp?

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A: There is no harm if he recites Al-Fatihah properly and does not alter its meaning. This is because the recitation of any Surah beside it is not obligatory. Otherwise, it is not permissible for him unless he is leading those who are like him.

Ruling on being led in prayer by someone who cannot recite Qur'an properly

Q: I am the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) of a Masjid (Mosque) in one of the suburbs of Riyadh. My problem is that I cannot apply the rules of Tajwid (art of Qur'anic recitation) properly and I make mistakes. I've memorized three Juz' (a 30th of the Qur'an) and some Ayahs from some Surahs; however, I am afraid of being blameworthy Should I continue as the Imam, or should I resign?

A: You should do your best to memorize the Qur'an and study the rules of Tajwid. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) will help you if your intentions are pure and if you exert all your efforts. Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾and whosoever fears Allâh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾"One who is proficient in the Qur'an is associated with the noble, upright, righteous angels; and he who falters in it, and finds it difficult for him,

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will have a double reward."﴿ You should not resign, but you should exert continuous effort and be patient until you succeed in reciting the Qur'an according to the rules of Tajwid and memorize it all, or as much as possible. May Allah grant you success and facilitate things for you!

Q: Someone that he is so shy that he cannot lead people in Salah (prayers). Although he may be in some cases the most proficient reciter of the Qur'an, he refuses to act as the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). He quivers because of his shyness when asked any question. He seeks your advice and guidance.

A: It is obligatory for believers and knowledge seekers to have a strong will and vigor for conveying and enjoining the good, teaching, and advising misguided and ignorant persons, and enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. It is the duty of every believer, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (A strong believer is better and dearer to Allah than a weak one, and both are good.)

It is the strong believer who instructs people and leads them in Salah,

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when necessary. The believer enjoins what is right and forbids what is wrong. That is why he is better than the weak believer who is unable to benefit others.

I advise this questioner to fear Allah have strong determination He should lead people in Salah (prayers) if he is the best among them. He should inform people of the Fatwas (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) they need so long as he has sure knowledge about Allah and His Messenger. Shyness is not praiseworthy wherein people are in need of instruction and having their needs meet. Only a sinner or an ignorant person should feel shy, but a believer should feel confident and eager. He must to be a pioneer in all fields of life to benefit and guide people to goodness. Allah is the One Whose help is sought.

Ruling on offering Salah behind an Imam who makes Lahn in the Qur'an

Q: What is the ruling on offering Salah (Prayer) behind an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who makes Lahn (incorrect recitation due to mispronunciation of letters or grammatical mistakes) in the Qur'an by adding or omitting diacritics to the Qur'anic letters?

A: If his Lahn does not change the meaning, there is no harm in offering Salah behind him such as changing the Kasrah (short vowel I) of the word "Rabbi" to Fathah (short vowel A) as "Rabba" or Dammah (short vowel U) as "Rabbu" in ﴾All the praises and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).﴿

or changing the Kasrah of the word "Ar-Rahmani" to Fathah (Ar-Rahmana) or Dammah (Ar-Rahmanu) and so on. If this Lahn changes the meaning, it is not permissible to offer Salah behind him, because there is no use correcting him such as reciting "Iyyaka Na`budu" by changing the Fathah of "Iyyaka" to Kasrah "Iyyaki" or reciting the word "An`amta" with Kasrah "An`amti" or with Dammah "An`amtu". If he accepts the correction and corrects the Ayah, the Salah will be valid. It is permissible for a Muslim in all cases to teach his Muslim brother; during or outside the Salah, because a Muslim is the brother of a Muslim who should correct him when he makes a mistake teaching him when he is ignorant reminding him when he forgets the Qur'an.

If an Imam recites

Surat-ul-Fatihah incorrectly, what is the ruling on offering Salah behind him?

Q: If the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) mispronounces Surat-ul-Fatihah, is the Salah (Prayer) offered behind him invalid?

A: If the Imam commits mistakes in recitation while reading Surat-ul-Fatihah which result in changing the meaning, it is obligatory to inform him of that and remind him during his recitation. Then, if he responds and recites correctly, praise is due to Allah; otherwise, it is not permissible to offer Salah behind him. It is obligatory on those in charge to replace him. An example of a mistake that changes the meaning is to pronounce the "T" in the word "An`amta" in Allah's Saying: ﴾those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace﴿ in a way that sounds like "An`amti" or "An`amtu" or to pronounce the "K" in the word "Iyyaka" in His Statement, ﴾You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).﴿ as "Iyyaki" which changes the meaning. As for mistakes that do not change the meaning as mispronouncing the "N" in the word "Al-`Alamin with a short vowel "U" or Al-Rahman" with a short vowel "A", will not render Salah invalid.

What should Ma'mums do when the Imam makes an error in Jahri Salah?

Q: Should a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) correct the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) if the latter makes a mistake in a Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) such as forgetting an Ayah (Qur'anic verse) or part of an Ayah, mispronunciation, etc.?

A: If the Imam makes mistakes in his recitation, forgets an Ayah, or makes Lahn (incorrect recitation due to mispronunciation of letters or grammatical mistakes), it is permissible for the Ma'mum to correct him. However, it is obligatory upon the Ma'mum to correct the Imam if the latter makes a mistake in reciting Al-Fatihah because it is one of the pillars of Salah. However, if the Lahn does not alter the meaning, it is not obligatory upon the Ma'mum to correct him such as changing the word "Al-Rahmani" to "Al-Rahmana".

Ruling on appointing an amputee as an Imam

Q: I had my leg amputated due to a car accident. Is it permissible for me to lead people in Salah (Prayer) in the absence of an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer)? Is it permissible for me to wipe over it

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on performing Wudu' (ablution)?

A: If this cut does not prevent you from performing Salah standing, there is nothing wrong with your leading people in Salah, if you meet the other conditions required for being an Imam.

As for wiping over it,, this is possible if a part of the foot still exists and you wears Khuffs (leather socks) or socks in a state of Taharah (ritual purity) for one day and night for a resident, and for three days and nights for a traveler, as confirmed by the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet).

However, if the leg is amputated above the heel, it should not be wiped or washed, for above the heel is not a valid place for washing or wiping. May Allah compensate you well, relieve your ordeal and give you patience!

Ruling on the Imam keeping silent

after Al-Fatihah until the Ma'mum recites it

Q: What is the ruling on the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) keeping silent after reciting Al-Fatihah until the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) recites it? If the Imam does not keep silent for a while, when should the Ma'mum recite Al-Fatihah?

A: There is no clear authentic evidence that indicates the permissibility of

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the Imam keeping silent until the Ma'mums recite Al-Fatihah in Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud). With regard to the Ma'mums, it is prescribed for them to recite it when the Imam is silent; if this is not possible, the Ma'mums should recite it secretly even while the Imam recites, then they can listen to the Imam, based upon the generality of the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾The Salah (Prayer) of a person is not valid unless he/she recites Fatihat al-Kitab (Surah Al-Fatihah)﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾'Perhaps you recite behind your Imam?' They replied: 'Yes, we do.' He said: 'Do not do so except when it is Fatihat al-Kitab (Surah Al-Fatihah) for there is no Salah for a person who does not recite it.﴿ [Related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Habban, through Hasan (good) Sanad (chain of narrators)].

These two Hadiths particularize the meaning of Allah's Saying: ﴾So, when the Qur'ân is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy. [i.e. during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imâm (of a mosque) is leading the prayer (except Sûrat Al-Fâtihah), and also when he is delivering the Friday-prayer Khutbah]. (Tafsir At-Tabari).﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The Imam is appointed so that he should be followed, so do not be at variance with him. So whenever he utters Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), you should repeat it after him, and whenever he recites (Qur'an), you should listen attentively (to him).﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

However, if the Ma'mum does not recite Al-Fatihah out of ignorance or forgetfulness, his Salah is valid according to the most preponderant of the opinions of scholars, for his recitation of Al-Fatihah is Wajib (obligatory), rather than being a Rukn (integral /Pillar). Likewise, if the Ma'mum catches up with the Imam while the Imam is bowing and bowed with him, this Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) is counted for him and he does not have to recite Al-Fatihah, due to the passing of its time. The basic principle in this regard is the Hadith reported on the authority of Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafy (may Allah be pleased with him) that he ﴾came to offer Salah

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while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bowing, so he bowed before he could reach the row then he stood in the row. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) made Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), he said to him: May Allah increase your love for the good, but do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadith) The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order the man to repeat the Rak`ah, which indicates that whoever misses standing with the Imam is not required to recite Al-Fatihah. The same ruling applies to whoever of the Ma'mums does not recite it out of ignorance or forgetfulness according to the most preponderant of the opinions of scholars. May Allah grant us success!

Imams should

offer Salah in tranquility and serenity

Q: Because of how quickly some Imams (the one who leads congregational Prayer) perform prayers, a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) has to overlook reciting any Surahs after Al-Fatihah in the Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation). Do I have to repeat the prayer after being led by such Imams as I do not feel tranquility nor serenity when I offer prayers with them?

Answer: The Imams must fear Allah and offer prayers in tranquility and solemnity in bowing and prostration. They have to recite the Qur'an slowly in sweet voices so that they recite Allah's Words in a good and clear manner to capture people's hearts.

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It is a duty on Imams to do their best to remain tranquil and solemn in prayer so that they and others benefit from prayer. They must also offer prayer in the manner that Allah prescribes. Allah (He May be exalted) says: ﴿Successful indeed are the believers.﴾ ﴿Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴾ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered one who did not offer prayer appropriately to be tranquil in his prayer. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ﴿When you stand for prayer, perform the ablution properly, then face the Qiblah and pronounce Takbir (Allahu Akbar). Recite what you know of the Qur'an, bow, and remain in this state till you feel at rest in bowing. Then, raise your head and stand erect, and then prostrate yourself till you feel at rest in prostration..."﴾ Thus, Imams should give due attention to this matter. They should feel rest in their bowing, prostration, after bowing, and between the two prostrations. They must recite the Qur'an clearly without distorting or ommiting any letters, giving a chance to Ma'mumin (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) to recite some Surahs after reciting Al-Fatihah. Athough reciting Surahs after Fatiha is not obligatory, it is better for Ma'mumin to recite as much as they can of the Qur'an after reciting Al-Fatihah with the Imam. The Imam should recite as much as he can after Al-Fatihah in the Sirri Salah

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and in Jahri Salah (Prayer recited audibly) during the first and second units. During the Sirri Salah, the Ma'mumin should recite verses after Al-Fatihah, but in the Jahri Salah it is enough for them to recite only the Fatihah and then listen to the Imam. If the Ma'mumin cannot recite any Surah after Al-Fatihah due to the Imam rushing, this does not affect their prayer. It is only obligatory to recite Al-Fatihah, and the additional verses they recite are not obligatory; so if they do not recite more verses, this will not affect their prayer or render it null. However;an Imam has to take care to be composed and at rest when bowing, prostrating, between the two prostration, and after kneeling. All these are of great importance and must be done by all; by the Imam and by those behind him. May Allah guide us all.

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The Ruling on offering Salah behind those known for believing in the exaggeration of reverence for prophets and pious people

All praises are due to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and companions.

I was asked by the Saudi Educational Staff in Yemen in the year 1395 A.H. about the ruling on offering prayer behind Al-Zaydiyyah. I replied that I do not see it is permissible to offer prayers behind them, as in general they are known for their extremism in honoring the Prophet's Family. They supplicate, pray and vow to them, etc. This was the answer that I based on what reached me from many resources that Al-Zaydiyyah have extreme beliefs in honoring the Prophet's Family with forms of Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) such as supplicating and vowing to them. Then I was told in these days during Sha`ban, 1396 A.H. that many scholars in Yemen denounced this Fatwa. Some praiseworthy and trustworthy graduates from the Islamic University in Al-Madinah known for their knowledge called me saying that the majority of

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scholars among Al-Zaydiyyah are free from the extreme honoring of the Prophet's Family. This is what they know about them. Only the laity and some of Al-Zaydiyyah who have no knowledge or insight regarding the essence of Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/monotheism) and Shirk have these extreme beliefs. They also mentioned that they know that the scholars of Al-Zaydiyyah denounce those who hold extreme beliefs in honoring the Prophet's Family. They also denounce Shirk and they say that it is not permissible to accuse the majority of them because some of the laity commit Shirk. Therefore, they asked me to consider this Fatwa, as it is a must to follow the right as believers should only seek the truth and whenever they find it, they have to hold fast to it.

I say that this Fatwa was mentioned before and I really abandoned it, for it is not right to issue general and absolute rulings. My objective is to reach the right and call to it. I seek refuge with Allah from pronouncing any Muslim a disbeliever or to prevent people from offering prayers behind a Muslim without legal evidence. We should judge people sinful if we see them commit sin and judge them by their apparent statements and deeds. So, for every Imam who is known for his extreme honoring of the Prophet's Family or others, whether they were Al-Zaydiyyah or others, in Yemen or elsewhere, it is not permissible to offer prayers behind them.

Whoever is not known to do this from Al-Zaydiyyah or other Muslims, they are permissible to lead people as Imams. The general rule is that Muslims qualify as Imams and are free from Shirk unless there is evidence to the contrary

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and just proof that indicates their commiting Shirk or believing in it. This is my opinion, which I declare now to my brothers in Yemen and other places. I mentioned before that believers should only seek the truth. When they find it, they should hold fast to it. It is known that only Allah is infallible and He makes His Prophets infallible with regard to what they convey about Allah (May He be exalted). Every Mufti, scholar, and knowledge seeker may commit mistakes and after they know the truth, they must return. This indicates their nobility and honor. This is the way of scholars from the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) till our day. Scholars were praised for this virtue. We and all the people have to be this way and come back to the truth and hold fast to it in all cases. May Allah guide us to what pleases Him and help us and all our brothers in Yemen and elsewhere to reach the truth in words and deeds, for Allah (May He be exalted) is All-Hearing and All-Near. May Allah's Peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

What is the ruling on offering prayer behind a person who seeks blessings from graves of pious people and recites the Qur'an during Mawalid (birthdays) and other occasions for money?

A: This issue has some details: If celebrating the birthdays does not include Shirk (attributing partners to Allah during worship), the person is a Mubtadi` i.e. perpetrator of Bid`ah (a matter innovated in Islam). He should, therefore not be appointed as Imam according to what is authentically reported in

the authentic Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾Avoid novelties, for every novelty (in Deen) is an innovation, and every innovation is a misguidance.﴿

Accordingly, celebrating birthdays is included among Bid`ahs, but if one invokes the dead and seeks help from them, the Jinn (creatures created from fire), or other creatures, or supplicates the prophet; or others such as saying: O my master Al-Husayn, O my master Al-Badawy, or inanimate objects likes idols, then one is committing major Shirk. It is not permissible to offer prayer behind him or to appoint him as Imam (leader in prayer). We invoke Allah to protect us against this. If one attends the Mawalid and does not commit acts of Shirk, or just recites the Qur'an or offers prayers by the graves but does not commit Shirk, he commits Bid`ah. He should be informed and directed to the right and his prayer is valid if he offers it away from graves; for offering prayer in graves renders prayer invalid according the Prophet's statement, ﴾May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they used the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

The Ruling On offering Salah behind a person who beseeches the help of others beside Allah

Q: Is it permissible to offer prayer behind one who beseeches others rather than Allah for help and says phrases like: "O Source of Help, help us", "O Jilani, provide for us." Is it permissible for me to offer prayer at home, if I find none but this Imam?

Answer: It is not permissible to offer prayers behind Mushrikun (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) including those who seek the help of others, e.g. the dead, idols, Jinn (creatures created from fire), etc., beside Allah and ask them for provision. But it is permissible to seek the help of the living who can help you, for Allah (May He be exalted) states in the story of Moses: ﴾The man of his (own) party asked him for help against his foe﴿ If you do not find a Muslim Imam, it is permissible then to offer prayer at your home. If you find a group of Muslims who are able to offer prayer at the mosque before or after the polytheist Imam, or if Muslims can fire the polytheist Imam and employ a Muslim Imam to lead them in prayer; it is obligatory on them to do so, as this is a way of enjoining the right, forbidding

the evil, and enforcing Allah's Law on His land; provided that it is possible without resulting in any disruption. Allah (May he be exalted) says: ﴾The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden)﴿ and, ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿

Likewise, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) says: ﴾"Whoever, among you, sees something abominable should rectify it with his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) in his heart, and that is the least of Faith."﴿ Reported by Muslim in his Sahih.

Q: Is it permissible for a Muslim to abandon a Masjid (Mosque) where a Mushrik (one who associates others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) leads people in Salah for another where the Imam is steadfast upon the Sunnah?

A: Yes, a person should do so because offering Salah behind a Mushrik is not valid.

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Offering Salah with and behind the followers of Bid`ah

Q: What is the ruling on staying in a country where people practice Bid`ah (innovations in religion)? Is it permissible to offer Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and the congregational Prayer with them? Should the person offer Salah separately? Is Jumu`ah Prayer waived for him? If those who follow the Sunnah are less than twelve, is it permissible for them to perform Jumu`ah Prayer or not?

A: Establishing Jumu`ah Prayer behind any Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), be he a pious or a disobedient is obligatory. If the Bid`ah which the Imam commits does not take him out of Islam, it is permissible for Muslims to pray behind him. It is stated by Imam Abu Ja`far Al-Tahawi (may Allah be merciful with him) in his famous book on `Aqidah: "We hold that it is permissible to offer Salah behind every pious or disobedient Muslim, as well as offering Funeral Prayer for those who die among them..." In his explanation of this statement, the well-grounded and eminent scholar who commented on this book said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Offer Salah behind the Imam, be he pious or disobedient.") (Related by Makhul

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from Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) and compiled by Al-Daraqutni, who said that Makhul did not meet Abu Hurairah. Its chain of transmission includes Mu`awiyah ibn Salih whose authenticity is questioned. However, Muslim narrated this Hadith in his Sahih book of Hadith)

Al-Daraqutni and Abu Dawud also related from Makhul on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ("Salah is obligatory on you behind every Muslim, pious or impious, even if he commits major sins. Jihad (striving in the Cause of Allah) is obligatory upon you along with every ruler, whether he is pious or impious.") It is related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith that `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) used to offer Salah behind Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi. Anas ibn Malik prayed also behind Al-Hajjaj and Al-Hajjaj was a corrupt tyrant. It is also recorded by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("If the Imam leads Salah correctly, then he and you will receive the rewards, but if he makes a mistake (in Salah) then you will receive the reward for Salah and the sin (will be his).") It is reported on the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allab be pleased with them) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, ("Offer Salah behind whomever says, "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah," and offer Funeral Prayer for whomever says, "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah.") (This Hadith is recorded by Al-Daraqutni through some ways of transmission that he deemed to be weak).

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Know (may Allah have mercy on you and us) that the scholars agree that it is permissible to offer Salah behind an Imam who is not known to have committed any Bid`ah or an act of transgression. However, it is not a condition for the Ma'mum to know the beliefs of the Imam or examine him saying, "What are your beliefs?" Rather, the Ma'mum should pray behind the Imam without knowing his condition. According to the majority of the Salaf (Righteous Predecessor) and their successors, it is permissible to offer Salah behind the regular Imam, behind whom the Salah should be offered such as the Imam for Jumu`ah and Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer), or the Imam of Hajj Prayers at `Arafah and the like, even if he is a Mubtadi` (one who introduces innovations in religion) who calls people to follow his Bid`ah (rejected innovation in religion) or a Fasiq (someone who flagrantly violates Islamic law). The person who neglects offering Jumu`ah and Congregational Prayers behind a corrupt Imam is considered a Mubtadi`, according to the opinion of the majority of Muslim Scholars. The sound opinion is that one must to offer prayer behind a corrupt Imam and need not repeat it.

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to offer Jumu`ah Prayer and the Congregational Prayers behind wicked Imams without repeating such prayers. For example, `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to pray behind Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf. Likewise, Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) used to pray behind him as mentioned before. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) and other Companions used to pray behind Al-Walid ibn `Uqbah ibn Abu A-Mu`ayt who was a drunkard to the extent that one day he led them in Fajr (Dawn) prayer in the form of four Rak`ahs. He, then said, "What about offering more Rak`ahs?" Ibn Mas`ud replied, "You have already offered more than due." It is related in Sahih book that when `Uthman

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(may Allah be pleased with him) could not reach the Masjid to lead the people in the Congregational Salah, another Imam led the people in Salah. It was said to `Uthman, "You are the Imam of all the Muslims but the person who led people in prayer is one of the leaders of Fitnah." `Uthman replied, "Verily, Salah is the best thing people can do. However, if they offer it properly, do it along with them; but if they offer it improperly, eschew their wrong."

The Salah offered by a Fasiq or a Mubtadi` is correct. If a Ma'mum offers Salah behind any of them, his Salah will not be invalid. Yet, some dislike to offer Salah behind them because of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil is obligatory.

In addition, the one who exhibits Bid`ah and corruption is not to be appointed as a leader for Muslims. Rather Ta`zir (discretionary punishment) should be inflicted upon him so that he may repent. If it is possible to desert him till he repents, then this is good. If some people abandon offering Prayer behind him, as a form of forbidding evil till he repents or is fired, or people cease from imitating him, then abandoning Salah behind him is for a Shar`i benefit so long as the Ma'mum does not miss the Jumu`ah (Friday) or congregational prayers.

However, if leaving Salah behind such Imam means that the Ma'mum will not perform Jumu`ah and the Congregational Prayers, one must not abandon offering Prayer behind him and the one who does so is a Mubtadi` who does not follow the footsteps of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). If the Imam is appointed by those in charge and there is no Shar`i benefit, in such case it is not permissible to abandon Salah behind him.

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Rather offering Salah behind him is better.

Thus, if it is possible, a person who commits evil openly should be prevented from leading people in Salah. However, if such Imam is appointed by those in charge and it is not possible to stop him or it is only possible by means of a greater evil that is more harmful than the evil which the Imam commits openly, then it is not permissible to ward off a lesser evil by means of a greater one. Islam was revealed to achieve and protect interests, and to stop evils and reduce them as much as possible. The act of leaving Jumu`ah and congregational Prayers is worse than offering Prayer behind a corrupt Imam, especially if not attending them does not eliminate corruption. In this case, we will hinder the Shar`i benefit without removing this evil.

If a person can offer Jumu`ah Prayer and Congregational Prayers behind a pious Imam, this is better than offering them behind the corrupt one. However, if this person offers Salah behind a corrupt Imam without an excuse, this is a matter of dispute among scholars; some held that one must repeat the Salah while others held that one does not have to. This issue is explained in the books of Fiqh that deal with secondary questions. [End Quote]

The most preponderant opinion is not to repeat Salah according to the evidence mentioned above. Since the general principal is not to repeat Salah, no one is obliged to do so except with specific proof and we know of no proof on this point. May Allah grant us success!

As for the second question, there is a known difference among scholars in this regard.

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However, the most preponderant opinion is that it is permissible to establish Jumu`ah Prayers with at least three Muslims . As far as I know, there is no reliable evidence to support the view that establishing Jumu`ah Prayer is conditional upon the existence of twelve, forty persons, more, or less. It is obligatory to be performed in congregation of at least three persons. This is the opinion of a group of scholars and Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy upon him) and is the correct view as stated previously.

Ruling on offering Salah behind

a man whose doctrine contradicts that of Ahl Al-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah, such as the Asha`irah and the like

Q: Is it permissible to offer Salah (Prayer) behind a man whose doctrine contradicts that of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body), such as Asha`irah (a Muslim group that bases its issues of faith on logic)?

A: The most preponderant opinion -Allah knows best- is that it is permissible to offer Salah behind any Muslim, while it is impermissible to do so behind non-Muslims. This is the opinion of a large group of scholars and it is the most correct opinion.

As for whomever claims that it is impermissible to offer Salah behind sinners, such opinion is not the best since the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave license to offering Salah

behind rulers, although many rulers are sinners. Ibn 'Umar, Anas, as well as a group of Muslim scholars, offered Salah behind Al-Hajjaj who was one of the most oppressive people.

In conclusion, Salah is valid behind a mubtadi` (one who introduces innovations in religion) whose Bid`ah (innovation in religion) does not render him non-Muslim. It is also permissible to be offered behind a fasiq (someone flagrantly violating Islamic law) who commits manifest sins which do not take him out of the fold of Islam.

However, Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim community) should be given priority in this regard. The same applies to any group of people when performing Salah, they should give preference to the best among them.

The ruling on offering Salah behind a Mubtadi` and one who lengthens and trails his Izar (lower garment) below his ankles

Q: Is it permissible to offer Salah (prayer) behind a Mubtadi` (one who introduces innovations in religion) and one who lengthens and trails his Izar (lower garment) below his ankles?

A: According to the soundest of the two opinions of scholars, Salah behind a Mubtadi` and one who lengthens and trails his Izar (lower garment) below his ankles is valid. However, if the Bid`ah (innovation in Islam) renders the person a non-Muslim such as Jahmiyyah (a deviant Islamic sect denying some Attributes of Allah, claiming they are human qualities and cannot be ascribed to Allah) and others whose Bid`ah takes them out of Islam, Salah behind them is invalid. The Muslim rulers should choose this Imam from among those who are free of Bid`ah and Fisq (flagrant violation of Islamic law) and who are of good reputation. Leading people in Salah is a great matter and the Imam is an example for Muslims to follow. It is not permissible to appoint a Mubtadi` or a Fasiq (someone flagrantly violating Islamic law) as Imam while there are others who are better than him.

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Isbal (lengthening and trailing clothing below the ankles) is one of the sins which should be abandoned and avoided. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("The part of an Izar which hangs below the ankles is in the Fire") Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) books of Hadith. Qamis (long shirt), trousers, and Bisht (a traditional cloak made of wool worn by men) and the like take the same ruling of Izar. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ("There are three to whom Allah will neither speak on the Day of Resurrection, look at, nor purify (of their sins), and they will be tormented severely: One who trails his Izar, one who boasts of kindness shown to another, and one who promotes their business by false oaths.") Related by Muslim in his Sahih book of Hadith.

If a person lengthens and trails his Izar out of pride, he is committing a grievous sin and will receive his punishment in this worldly life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will not look at whomever trails his Izar out of conceit.")

It is obligatory upon all Muslims to beware of the things which Allah has prohibited such as Isbal as well as the other sins. Muslims should also beware of all acts of Bid`ah for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Whoever performs an action which is not in accordance with this affair of ours (Islam)

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will have it rejected.") Related by Muslim in his Sahih book of Hadith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated: ("The best speech is that embodied in the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. The most evil affairs are their innovations; and every innovation is error.") Related by Muslim.

May Allah grant all Muslims safety from Bid`ah and sins! He is the best to be sought for help.

The Ruling on offering Salah behind a Sufi

Q: Is it valid to follow a Sufi Imam who does not place his [right] hand on his [left] hand nor does he place his knees before his hands in Sujud (prostration)?

A: If he is known for his sound belief in the Oneness of Allah but has some incorrect or Sufi beliefs and he is a true Muslim who worships Allah alone and does not worship Sheikhs or other creatures such as Sheikh `Abdul-Qadir and others, his Salah is valid. The act of not placing hands on each other during Salah does not prevent

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people from offering Salah behind him, because this is a Sunnah and not an obligatory act. Placing the right hand on the left and the forearms on the chest during Salah is a Sunnah and those who place them by their side, their Salah is valid and they are not to blame. Some scholars hold it as recommended but the correct view is to place hands on each others, because this is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

These Hadiths explain the conditions of the Musalli (one who offers Salah) before and after Ruku`. There is a disagreement whether the Musalli should place his knees down before his hands or vice versa because of the difference in the reported Hadiths such as the Hadith of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), Ibn `Amr, and Wa'il ibn Hujr. Imam Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) gave a fatwa in preference of placing Knees before hands.

The sound opinion is that it is the better to place the knees down before the hands and face upon Sujud according to the Hadiths. The first of the Hadith of Abu Hurairah will then agree with the Hadith of Wa'il ibn Hujr and the relevant reports, because the prohibition of the manner of prostration that resembles that of a camel as reported in the Hadith of Abu Hurairah corresponds with the meaning of the Hadith of Wa'il that supports placing one's knees down before one's hands. Indeed, when the camel lies down, it places hands first and then legs. As for his saying at the end of Hadith of Abu Hurayrah: ﴾He should place his hands (on the ground) before placing his knees﴿ it is evidently an alteration in the narration in which some narrators made a mistake. The correct is:

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﴾He should place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands.﴿

Thus, the last part of the Hadith corresponds with its first as Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful with him) referred to in Zad Al-Ma`ad. This applies to those who have the ability, but if a person is unable due to old age or sickness, there is no harm in placing the hands down before the knees. There is no harm on those who believe that placing hands before the knees during Salah is the best and the matter is flexible. The disagreement is well-known between the people of knowledge.

A person should not be rigid about this, because the disagreement is about the best position but the Salah is valid according to both views. There is no harm in offering Salah behind an Imam who does either. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on offering prayer behind a sinner such as the beardless and the smoker

Q: What is the ruling on performing prayer behind a person commits sins such as shaving off the beard or smoking?

A: Scholars differ over this issue: Some hold

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that the Salah performed behind an evildoer is invalid due to the weakness of his faith and honesty. However, the majority of scholars maintain that it is valid, but rulers should not appoint wrongdoers as Imams (leaders in prayer) while there are good persons available. The last view is correct, for they are Muslims and know that prayer is obligatory on them. Therefore, they perform it. Consequently, prayer offered behind them is valid and this is substantiated by what is mentioned in the authentic Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding Salah behind disobedient rulers: ﴾They will lead you in prayer; if they offer it properly, it is for you both and if they offer it improperly, it is for you and against them.﴿ Other Hadiths are also reported in this regard. Some of the Prophet's companions offered prayer behind Al-Hajjaj, who was the worst of his time. Congregational Salah is strongly necessary; therefore a Muslim should be keen on observing it even if the Imam is an evildoer. However, if one can offer prayer behind a righteous Imam, it is better, preferable, and safer.

The Imamah (Leading people in Salah) of a smoker

What is the ruling on smoking? What the ruling on people being led in congregational prayer by a person who openly smokes?

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A: The legal evidence affirms the prohibition of smoking, because it involves many evils and harmful effects. Allah has only permitted food and drink that is wholesome and beneficial to His servants. Allah has forbidden all harmful and intoxicating substances that are proven injurious to their life or religion. Allah is more merciful towards them than their own selves. He is All-Wise and All-Knowing in His words, deeds, laws, and decrees. He does not forbid anything in jest or create anything in vain. He does not enjoin anything that is not of benefit to His slaves, because He is the wisest of the wise and the most Merciful of those who show mercy. He knows what is in the best interests of His sevants and will benefit them in this world and in the Hereafter. He says, ﴿Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.﴾ and, ﴿And Allâh is Ever All-Knower, All-Wise.﴾

There are many similar verses. Among the Qur'anic evidence indicating the prohibition of smoking is the verse in Surat-al-Ma'idah wherein Allah says, ﴿They ask you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) what is lawful for them (as food). Say: "Lawful unto you are At-Tayyibât [all kind of Halâl (lawful-good) foods which Allâh has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables and fruits)].﴾ Describing our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Allah also says in Surat-Al-A'raaf: ﴿he commands them for Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that Islâm has ordained); and forbids them from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds, and all that Islâm has forbidden); he allows them as lawful At-Tayyibât (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons, foods), and prohibits them as unlawful Al-Khabâ'ith (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods)﴾

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In these two verses, Allah elucidates that He has permitted only good things; beneficial foods and drinks. As for harmful foods and drinks, such as intoxicants, drugs, and all kinds of foods and drinks which cause spiritual, physical, or mental harm; they are among the evil and unlawful things that are forbidden.

Doctors and scholars unanimously agree that smoking causes a great deal of harm. They have stated that it causes many diseases such as cancer, stroke, etc. Anything that is of this nature is undoubtedly prohibited and must be avoided. No wise man should be deceived by the fact that there are many people who smoke. Allah says in His Book: ﴿And if you obey most of those on the earth, they will mislead you far away from Allâh's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie.﴾ also: ﴿Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are only like cattle - nay, they are even farther astray from the Path (i.e. even worse than cattle).﴾

As for smokers and other disobedient people, they should not be appointed as Imams (leaders in congregational prayer). The Imam should be chosen from the best Muslims to lead the prayers. Those who are known for their commitment and integrity, because

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leading the prayers is something important. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) said, ﴿The one who is most versed in Allah's Book should act as Imam for the people, but if they are equally versed in reciting it, then the one who is most knowledgeable in Sunnah. Again, if they are equal regarding the Sunnah, then the earliest immigrant [to Madinah. Ed.]; if they emigrated at the same time, then the earliest one to embrace Islam.﴾ (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih).

It is also related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Malik ibn Al-Huwayrith and his companions, ﴿When the time of Salah (prayer) becomes due, let one of you announce Adhan (call to prayer) and the oldest of you lead you in prayer.﴾ The scholars differed as to whether it is valid for a sinner to lead the prayer or not: Some held that a prayer offered behind him is not valid, because his commitment is weak and his faith is imperfect. Other scholars said that it is valid for him to lead the prayer and prayers offered behind him are valid, because he is a Muslim whose prayer is valid for himself, so prayers offered behind him are valid, because many of the companions prayed behind some rulers who were known for wrongdoing and evil. For example, Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them) offered prayer behind Al-Hajjaj, who was one of the gravest wrongdoers. This is the most preponderant view, namely, it is valid for them to lead prayer and the prayers of those who pray behind them are valid.

However, such people should not be appointed as Imams when it is possible to

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appoint someone else who is righteous. This a concise answer thereby intending to present the basis of the ruling on these two questions and to provide some relevant evidence. The scholars have dealt with these issues in detail and their long discussions are available for those who require it.

May Allah reform al Muslims, help them to be upright and beware of things contrary to His Legislation. He is Generous and Gracious. May Allah's Peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, upon his family and Companions.

Q: Is it permissible for people to offer the Salah behind a man who smokes openly or emulates the kuffar (disbelievers) in their way of dressing and other things?

A: It is permissible to offer Salah behind such a person, if he is a Muslim, according to the most preponderant of the two scholarly opinions. However, if a Congregational Salah is available behind a better person in the Masjid (mosque), this is preferable and safer.

Q: What is the Ruling on offering Prayer behind an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who commits sins such as smoking, shaving the beard, Isbal (lengthening and trailing clothing below the ankles), or the like?

Answer: The prayer of the Imam and those offering prayers behind him is valid if the Imam offers it in the prescribed way as Allah commands. This is unanimously stated by the scholars according to the strongest of the two opinions

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among the scholars. As for the disbeliever, his prayer and the prayer of those offering it behind him is invalid, as it lacks the condition of Islam. Those in authority must choose Imams who are known for knowledge, virtue, and justice as much as possible. May Allah guide us all.

The Imam should not neglect the Congregational Salah

Q: I have been appointed as a resident Imam in a Masjid (mosque), but people there do not offer the Congregational Salah (Prayer) except on Friday. After the Jumu`ah Salah (Friday Prayer) they return to their homes and only three people come to the regular Congregation. Because of this, the Mu'adhin (caller to prayer) has asked that I come on Fridays only, since I live 30 kilometers away from the Masjid. Please provide me with an answer about my case, especially that I also work as a teacher and the distance is very far for me. It is worth mentioning that I was asked to attend all the Congregational Salah when I was appointed as the Imam. Please advise. May Allah bless you.

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A: According to the assignment entrusted to you by your authority, there is an obligation on you to lead the Salah at all times. However, delegating the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) or others who have the competence to lead people is only acceptable if the designated authority permits you to do so.

What should an Imam do if he commits a mistake in recitation and no one corrects him?

Q: If an Imam forgets some Ayahs (Qur'anic Verses) during his recitation and no one among those praying behind him reminds him of the Ayah (Qur'anic Verse), should he say "Allah Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest) and complete the Rak`ah (unit of prayer) or should he recite another Surah (chapter from the Qur'an)?

A: He can either say "Allah Akbar" and conclude the recitation or he can recite another Ayah, or some Ayahs from another Surah. This is in conformity with the the Sunnah regarding the reading of a Surah after Al-Fatihah. As for reciting Al-Fatihah, it is obligatory since it is one of the pillars of prayer. Allah is the One Who brings success.

Women leading women in Salah

Q: Is it permissible for women to assign one of them as an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to lead them in Salah during Ramadan and other times?

A: Yes. There is no harm in that. There are some statements from `Aishah, Um Salamah, and Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) to this effect. The woman acting as Imam should stand in the middle of the row and recite the Qur'an audibly in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited aloud). May Allah grant us success!

Q: A questioner from Los Angeles asks: "Where should a woman stand when leading women in prayer? Is there any difference among the schools of Fiqh in this regard? Please, advise. May Allah reward you!

A: Woman should stand between women in the middle of a row as `Aishah and Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with both of them) did to avoid resembling men. I know of no disagreement on this issue among the scholars. It is recommended for women to recite audibly in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited aloud) like men which is more useful. Allah is the One Who grants success.

Women reciting the Qur'an audibly during Salah

Q: What is the minimum number of women required for establishing a congregational prayer? Should a woman raise her voice while leading women during Salah?

A: If she is leading women in Salah, it is permissible for her to recite audibly in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited aloud) in order to allow them hear her recitation and benefit from the words of Allah. There is no specific number required for this. If there is only one woman with the Imam, she may stand on her right side and if they are many, they are to stand to her right and left sides and the Imam is in the middle.

Women leading men in prayers

Q: A sister from Makkah Al-Mukarramah inquires: Is it permissible for a woman to lead her husband in Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) if she is more versed in the Qur'an than he is? She has another question: Her husband missed the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and when entering the home, he found her praying and joined her while she was the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer); is their Salah valid?

A: It is impermissible for a woman to lead a man and his Salah behind her is invalid on account of many evidences. The husband in question should repeat his Salah. May Allah grant all success!

Istikhlaf during Salah

Q: I went to offer the `Isha' (Night) Prayer at the Masjid (mosque) and joined the congregation after they had performed two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer). After I pronounced Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) happened to have an excuse and left the prayer after choosing me as his successor in prayer (Istikhlaf). What should I have done in this case given that I missed two Rak`ahs?

A: You must offer the two Rak`ahs you have caught up with the congregation and then sit for Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) which is the first for you and the last for the congregation; then it is best to loudly invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) then stand while directing the congregation to remain seated till you make up the two Rak`ahs you missed. Finally, you lead the congregation to make Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), in which case you are excused and so they are and they must wait for you.

This is what you should have done. However, the first Imam should have given priority to a person who had not missed anything of the prayer to replace him. May Allah grant us sucess!

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A questioner from Aswan in the Arab Republic of Egypt inquires: After the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) performed two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of the `Isha' (Night) Prayer, he remembered that he did not perform Wudu' (ablution). He left the prayer and looked at the people praying after him to choose one to replace him, but found them all of the laypeople who cannot recite the Qur'an well. The one who recites well was at a distance from him. How could this person advance to replace him? Should he discontinue his prayer, then pronounce Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and lead the congregation? Or should he walk till he reaches the place of the Imam? What if the person who is qualified is in the second row? Guide us, may Allah reward you!

A: It is better for the Imam to choose someone to be his successor in leading the people in prayer if for some reason he must interrupt the prayer. If this is not possible, each one should continue praying on his own. If they wait for his return to pray with them, it is acceptable. When `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was stabbed while praying, he appointed `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) as his successor to lead the congregation. If the appointee is not directly behind the Imam and has to take a few steps, there is nothing wrong with this. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so when he led people in prayer while standing on the Minbar (pulpit), then he stepped down and prostrated

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on the ground to teach them what to do in this case. Similarly, in Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse), when he was shown the Jannah (Paradise), he took some steps forward and so did the people; when he was shown the Hell-fire, he took some steps backwards and so did those following. May Allah grant us success!

Assuming Imamah during Salah without Istikhlaf

Q: An Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) offers part of the Salah (prayer) and then he interrupts it and another person replaces him without having been chosen by the Imam to be his successor. After the Salah, the Ma'mumin (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) were confused whether the latter Imam was chosen to be the successor of the former or not. Some asked the second Imam if the first Imam had chosen him as his successor and he said: 'No'. Should the Ma'mumin repeat Salah? Should they investigate the case, and are there different views on the issue? Some students of knowledge held that the Salah was valid while others judged it as invalid?

A: If the Imam chooses someone to be his successor when it is necessary to interrupt his Salah, it is permissible to do so according to the people of knowledge. It is related on the authority of `Umar and `Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). Furthermore, `Umar did so when he was stabbed

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during the Salah. He chose `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) to complete the Salah. The full report is related in Sahih Al-Bukhari. Likewise, if a Ma'mum advances one among them when they are few, or several of them advance another if they are many, or someone moves forward to lead the people in Salah without being chosen as successor for the Imam. Abu Muhammad ibn Qudamah (may Allah be merciful with him) wrote in Al-Mughny after stating the proof on the permissibility of appointing a successor: An Imam is permitted to choose anyone to be his successor in Salah as `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) did. If he does not appoint but the Ma'mumin appoint one of them, it is permissible and if they offer Salah individually, it is permissible as well. Al-Zuhri judged that if the Imam experiences bleeding, nasal hemorrhage, or Madhi (pre-seminal fluid), he should leave and say 'Complete your Salah'.

No doubt that choosing a succor for the Imam to lead them in Salah is better than completing Salah individually. However Istikhlaf (choosing one's successor) of Imam is not a precondition for the validity of Salah after the Imam leaves it. If one of the Musalli (one who offers Salah) moves forward to lead others in Salah without being appointed by anyone, his Salah as well as the Salah of Ma`mumin is valid. Likewise, if he advances during Salah to complete the Salah after the first Imam, even if no one appoints him, because his advancing denotes the intention of assuming the Imamah (leading people during congregational Prayer) and their following denotes that they intend to take him as an Imam. Congregational Salah is legally necessary according to the Shari`ah, so what is confirmed by the Shari`ah is necessary to be done. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A questioner asks, "If the Imam leaves prayer without choosing someone to be his successor in leading people in Salah, should I advance to lead or complete the prayer alone?"

A: If during prayer the Imam nullifies his ablution, or remembers that he began prayer while not in a state of ritual purity, he should leave the prayer and choose someone to be his successor in leading the congregation and complete the prayer as `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) did when he was fatally stabbed while offering Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. He appointed `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf, who completed the prayer in place of `Umar. If the Imam does not choose someone to be his successor in prayer, one of those following the prayer behind him may proceed and lead the congregation. If they do not do so, it is permissible for them to offer prayer separately for they are excused in this case as clarified by scholars. Allah is the One Who brings success.

Leading the Salah having forgotten to perform Wudu'

Q: The Imam leads people in the Salah (Prayer) having forgotten to perform Wudu' (ablution). What is the ruling on this Salah in the following cases: 1- If he remembers that during Salah.

2- If he remembers after offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) and before the dispersion of the congregation.

3- If he remembers after the dispersion of the congregation.

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A: If the Imam remembers that he was not in a state of ritual purity after offering Taslim, the congregational Salah is valid for the attendees and they need not repeat it, but he must. On the other hand, if he remembers during the Salah, should choose someone to be his successor in leading the people in Salah according to the most correct of the two scholarly opinions. This was done by `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was stabbed during leading the people in Salah. He appointed `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) to be his successor in leading the people in Salah and he completed the Salah and did not start a new Salah. Allah is the One Who grants success.

Q: A person led others in one of the obligatory Salah (Prayers); however, after he concluded the Salah and everyone dispersed, he remembered that he did not perform Wudu' (ablution). He then repeated the Salah individually after performing Wudu'. Is the Congregational Salah valid in this case? Should he inform the Ma'mumin (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer)? What should he do if he does not know them?

A: The Salah of the Ma'mumin is valid, but the Imam (the one who leads a congregational prayer) should perform Wudu' and repeat his Salah in accordance with the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (Salah is not accepted without purification) Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith).

Ruling on an Imam whose Wudu' is nullified during Salah

Q: If the Wudu' (ablution) of an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) is nullified during Salah, should he appoint a person to lead people in his stead? Is the Salah of Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer) invalid? Should the Imam ask the person to lead the Ma'mums from the beginning?

A: It is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) to the Imam to appoint a person to complete the Salah as `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) did when he was fatally wounded while offering Salah. He appointed `Abdul-Rahman Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) who completed the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer with the people. If the Imam does not appoint a person to replace him, one of the congregation should proceed and lead them. Also, there is nothing wrong if they start Salah from the beginning, as scholars held different opinions on this issue. However, the preponderant view is that the Imam in this case should choose a person to lead the Ma'mums following the example of `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). It is permissible also to start offering Salah from the beginning. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A person led a group of people in Salah (Prayer) and after they had finished, he remembered that he was not in a state of Taharah (ritual purification) when he offered Salah. Afterwards, he went and observed Taharah and repeated Salah individually. Did he do the right thing? If not, what should he do now?

A: What this person did is the correct thing. In fact, he is obligated to do that. As for Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer), their Salah is valid since they did not know that their Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) was not in a state of Taharah during Salah. May Allah grant us success!

Remembering not to have performed Wudu' while leading Salah

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to our honorable brother, may Allah safeguard him. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

With reference to your question registered with the Department of Scientific Research, number (2954) dated 16/9/1406 A.H., in which you inquired: A regular Imam of a Masjid (mosque) started Salah (Prayer) while forgetting that he did not perform Wudu' (ablution). He only remembered this after offering the second Rak`ah (unit of Prayer), but he completed Salah and only performed Wudu' afterwards. What is the ruling of the Salah of the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer)? Is their Salah valid or should they offer it again? Also, if the Imam passes wind and some of the Ma'mums hear it, but he completes Salah and performs Wudu' afterwards, what is the ruling on Salah of the Ma'mums?

A: I am letting you know that if the Imam remembers during Salah that he did not perform Wudu', it is prohibited for him to continue. If he persists until he finishes Salah and the Ma'mums do not know that, their Salah is valid

while his Salah is not. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (They will lead you in Salah; if they offer it properly, it is for you both and if they offer it improperly, it is for you and against them.)

If the Ma'mums are aware of the nullification of Imam's Wudu' and continue following him, their Salah is invalid and they must offer it again.

May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatu!

President of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

Q: What is the ruling when the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) offers part of the Salah (Prayer) then remembers that he has not performed Wudu' (ablution) and leaves Salah? Should the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) continue their Salah or start a new Salah?

A: The correct view is that he should appoint someone to lead them in Salah as `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) did when he was fatally wounded. If the Imam does not appoint anyone and the Ma'mums advance someone to lead them in Salah, their Salah will be valid according to the soundest opinion of scholars. If they complete their Salah individually, it is correct as well. If the Imam finishes Salah and then remembers that he has offered it without Wudu', their Salah is valid while he should repeat his Salah.

Q: If a person offers Salah (Prayer) in congregation then remembers during Salah that they are not in a state of Taharah (ritual purification),

should they complete Salah or not, taking into consideration that this is an embarrassing situation?

A: It is not permissible for a person to complete Salah while they are not in a state of Taharah. In this case, they must discontinue Salah, perform Wudu' (ablution) and offer Salah again. In case they are unable to leave Salah due to multiple rows, they may sit until Salah is finished then perform Wudu' and offer Salah again. This is because Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him)

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also said: ﴾Salah is not accepted without Taharah.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith) May Allah grant us success!

Leading people in Salah without permission of the regular Imam

Q: There is a Masjid (mosque) with an appointed Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), but sometimes another man leads the congregational Salah (Prayer) without the permission of that Imam. Is the Salah of this man valid?

A: If the Imam is later than usual time, and one of the worshippers advances and leads the Salah, there is nothing wrong with this, and the Salah is valid for himself and those he leads. Once the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was delayed, so `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf led the Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not blame him, but approved of what he did and joined them in the rest of the Salah. It is also authentically reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the battle of Tabuk he stopped to answer the call of nature. Then the time of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer became due, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) was late, so they announced the Iqamah (call to Prayer) and `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf Al-Zuhri (may Allah be pleased with him) - one of the ten Companions given the glad tidings of Paradise - led the people in Salah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) came after `Abdul-Rahman had offered one Rak`ah (unit of Prayer), so he started to retreat, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) gestured to him to continue praying. The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed the remaining Rak`ah with him, until `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) and Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah then stood and made up for the part of Salah they missed. This indicates that if an Imam is late, the congregation should not be kept waiting, but should choose whomever they like of the righteous to lead them in Salah, so as not to delay people. This is the correct course of action.

As for those who rush to announce the Iqamah before its time, this is wrong and impermissible. It is not permitted for anyone to begin Salah before its usual time and lead people instead of the regular Imam except with his permission.

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Reciting the Qur'an consecutively in the Maghrib, `Isha' and Fajr Prayers

From 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, H.H. Sh. may Allah protect you! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reference to your question recorded in the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta', no. 1684, dated, 3 Jumada Awwal, 1407 A.H. which reads as follows: I would like to tell you that I am the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) of a Masjid (mosque) in Ta'if. Praise be to Allah, I memorize the Ever-Glorious Qur'an wholly. I like to recite it in consecutive order in the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, `Isha' (Night) Prayer and Fajr (Dawn) Prayer throughout the year, so as to finish a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) twice during Shawwal and Sha`ban every year, then I finish a third Khatmah in Ramadan. Does my act contradict the Shari`ah (Islamic law)? If I recite one page in the Maghrib and one page and a half in the `Isha' and three pages in the Fajr, is this too long for the worshippers? Is it permissible to make Du`a' (supplication) on finishing the Khatmah in Ramadan and other months? Besides, the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) find it too long to recite in Fajr Prayer on Friday

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Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Al-Sajdah in the first Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) and Surah Al-Insan in the second one, what do you think about this? Is it permissible to recite Surah Al-Sajdah divided between the two Rak`ahs and Surah Al-Insan on the following Friday divided also between the two Rak`ahs or is there no need to recite it if some of the worshippers praying behind me find this burdensome? I hope you could, by Allah's Support, clarify these two points for me. May Allah reward you well!

A: With regard to reciting the Qur'an consecutively in the Maghrib, `Isha' and Fajr Prayers in order to finish a Khatmah, I would like to inform you that it is better to quit this act, for it was not reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or any of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). All good lies in following the Sirah (biography) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). If it is possible to finish the Khatmah in Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer), this will be better for you in this world and in the Hereafter, and you can In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) recite the whole Qur'an several times before the coming of Ramadan.

With regard to making Du`a' on finishing the Khatmah, there is nothing wrong with doing this during and outside Salah; it is the tradition of the early Salaf (righteous predecessors), as mentioned by the eminent scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful to him) in his book, Jala' Al-Afham fil-Salah wal-Salam 'ala Khayril-Anam.

With regard to reciting the two Surahs of Al-Sajdah and Al-Insan in the Fajr Prayers on Friday, we recommend you to go on doing this, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

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and his successors in righteousness, even if this would be burdensome for some worshippers.

May Allah guide us all to do what pleases Him and to remain adherent to Al-Haqq (the Truth) and help us do good! He is All-Hearer and Responsive. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

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Ruling on a latecomer being the Imam

Q: A man entered the Masjid (mosque) after the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) and Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) said the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). He found a latecomer completing his Salah (Prayer), so he stood beside him to make that latecomer his Imam and, thus, attain the reward of congregational Salah. Is that permissible for him or not? Is the Salah which he performed with the latecomer valid?

A: If a person enters the Masjid after the people have completed Salah and finds another latecomer completing his Salah, it is prescribed for him to offer Salah with him and to stand to his right, seeking the reward of congregational Salah. In this case, the latecomer should intend to lead the other man in Salah. There is nothing wrong with that according to the more correct of the two scholarly opinions. Similarly, if he finds a man praying alone after the Imam has said the Taslim, it is prescribed for him to join him in Salah and to stand to his right, seeking the reward of congregational Salah. When the latecomer or the one offering Salah individually says the Taslim, that man should stand up and complete his Salah, based on the generality of evidence on the virtue of congregational Salah. It was authentically reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man entering the Masjid after the Salah was over, he said: ﴾If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.﴿

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Q: Someone missed some Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) with the Imam and when he was making up for them, a latecomer joined him in Salah and took him as the Imam. Is this permissible?

A: The correct opinion is that there is nothing wrong with this, in order to attain the reward of congregational Salah.

Intention is a condition for leading others in Salah

Q: Is intention a condition for leading others in Salah (Prayer)? If a person enters the Masjid (mosque) and finds another person offering Salah, should he join him, taking him as an Imam (the one who leads congregational Salah)? Is it prescribed to take a latecomer as an Imam?

A: It is a condition to have the intention when leading others in Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what they have intended.) If a person enters the Masjid after the congregational Salah is over and finds another person offering Salah alone, it is possible, even better, to join him, taking him as an Imam.

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(When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man entering the Masjid after people had finished Salah, he said: If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.) Thus, the two people will get the reward of congregational Salah and it will be a Nafilah (supererogatory) for the one who has already offered the obligatory Salah.

It was reported that Mu`adh (may Allah be pleased with him) used to offer the `Isha' (Night) Prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him), then offer it with his people which counted for him as Nafilah and for them as Faridah (obligatory act) and the Prophet (peace be upon him) approved of his act.

As for a latecomer, it is possible for whoever misses the congregational Salah to join him in order to attain the reward of congregational Salah. In this case, when the latecomer completes his Salah, the person who has joined him should stand up to complete his, based on the generality of related evidence. This ruling is general and applies to the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. (The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) when he mentioned to him that some rulers would delay Salah beyond its prescribed time: Offer Salah at its due time, then if you join them offer it with them, and it will be (counted as) a Nafilah for you. Do not say I have (already) offered Salah so I will not offer it (again).) May Allah grant us success!

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Q: If a group of people enter the Masjid (mosque) and find a man offering Salah alone, should they take him as Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) or should one of them be the Imam? Please, guide us!

A: Praise be to Allah. It is prescribed for those people to offer congregational Salah (Prayer). In fact, it is obligatory for them to do that. However, if they think the person offering Salah alone is worthy of being Imam and they offer Salah behind him, there is nothing wrong with that and they should make up for what they have missed.

Q: If I enter the Masjid (mosque) after the congregational Salah (Prayer) is over and I say the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) and Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), then a man comes in and joins me in my Salah, but I do not take the intention of being the Imam (the one who leads congregational Salah), will his Salah be valid or not?

A: The correct view is that it is prescribed for you to take the intention of leading the Salah when one or more people join you in Salah, because it is required to offer congregational Salah and it entails great virtue. Some scholars are of the view that this is valid only in Nafilah (supererogatory) Salah. However, the correct view is that it is valid in both Nafilah and Faridah (obligatory) Salah, because the basic rule is that the rulings on both are the same, except in cases where there is specific evidence. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾was offering Salah at night alone in the house of

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Maymunah, maternal aunt of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with all of them), then Ibn `Abbas got up, performed Wudu' (ablution) and stood to the left of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) made him move to his right and led him in Salah.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It was related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾was offering Salah alone when Jabir and Jabbar came and stood to his right and his left. He made them stand behind him and led them in Salah.﴿ These two Hadith indicate what we have mentioned. They also indicate that if there is only one other person, he should stand to the right of the Imam, and if there are two or more they should stand behind him.

Q: I attended the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and joined the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in the third Rak`ah (unit of Prayer). After the Imam said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), I stood up to make up for the Rak'ahs I missed, then a man came and started offering Salah (Prayer) behind me, taking me as his Imam. Am I entitled to be an Imam for him? Would he get the reward of congregational Salah? Guide us, may Allah benefit you!

A: According to the most preponderant scholarly opinion, there is nothing wrong with this In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) as he would be Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) and you would be Imam. Both of you would attain the reward of congregational Salah In sha'a-Allah. However, if he offers Salah alone and you resume alone, there is nothing wrong with that, but if he joins you in Salah, he should stand to your right hand not to your left as indicated by the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). May Allah grant us success!

Q: A man entered the Masjid (mosque) after `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and after the congregational Salah (Prayer) was over. He, thus, started offering Salah alone, then a man joined him. Is it permissible to lead him in Salah?

A: If the latecomer resumes his Salah then another one joins him, he should stand to his right; if two join him, they should stand behind him to attain the reward of congregational Salah. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) (saw a man entering the Masjid after people had finished Salah, he said: If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.) The act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is that some of the attendants shall offer Salah with the newcomer in order for him to attain the reward of congregational Salah. This is prescribed and it has great virtue.

Ruling on conveying the Imam's Takbir

Q: What is the ruling on conveying, in a loud voice, the Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to those offering Salah (Prayer) behind him, bearing in mind that everyone hears the voice of the Imam?

A: If the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) hear the voice of the Imam clearly, there is no need to convey it to them. However, if it is not clear to some of the back rows, it is Mustahab (desirable) to convey it.

One day, the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Salah while he was ill and his voice was weak, so Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) conveyed what he said to the Ma'mums. There is nothing wrong with this.

If there is a need to convey what the Imam says because the Masjid (mosque) is large and the Ma'mums are too many or because the voice of the Imam is too weak to reach the Ma'mums due to his illness, a person should convey what the Imam says to the Ma'mums. However, if his voice is clear to all and all hear it, there is no need to convey it and it is not permissible to do so.

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Performing congregational Salah and Jumu`ah Prayer in prisons

while inmates are in their cells

From `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz to H.E. the honorable brother, Director of the Department of Religious Affairs in the General Security Directorate, may Allah grant you success. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reference to your letter numbered (275), dated 1/5/1405 A.H. and its attachment in which you inquire about the ruling on praying Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer in congregation behind one Imam by prisoners while being locked into their cells using amplifiers. Since it is an important issue of public interest, I submitted it to the Council of Senior Scholars, which examined it during its twenty sixth round held in Al-Ta'if in 25/10/1405 to 7/11/1405 A.H. After the Council had studied the case and became aware of the opinions of the scholars in this regard, it declared its disapproval of letting prisoners offer Jumu`ah Prayer behind one Imam while being locked into their cells

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using an amplifier, for it is not obligatory on them to offer it when imprisoned and unable to attend it, according to the Fatwa of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim (may Allah be merciful to him) numbered (762) dated 11/10/1388 A.H. on waiving the obligation to establish Jumu`ah Prayer in prison in addition to other reasons. However, anyone who is capable of attending it in the Masjid (mosque) of the prison, should offer it in congregation, if Jumu`ah Prayers are held there. Otherwise, they are exempted from this obligation and a person can offer it as Zhuhr (Noon). Every group should also offer the Five Obligatory Daily Salahs (Prayers) in congregation inside their cells, if it is not possible for them to gather in one place or one Masjid.

Sent for your perusal with your previously mentioned letter and its attachment. May Allah grant all people success in doing whatever pleases Him. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

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Catching one Rak`ah means catching congregational Salah

Q: If I join Salah (Prayer) while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) is saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), am I credited as having caught the congregational Salah or must I catch one Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) to have the reward of congregational Salah? If a group enters the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is in the final Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in last unit of Prayer), should they join the Imam or wait until he finishes with Taslim and they start another congregation?

A: One is not credited as having joined the congregational Salah unless one catches one Rak`ah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever catches a Rak`ah of Salah has indeed caught the Salah.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith) However, anyone who has a Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse that prevents him from attending the congregation will receive the reward of congregational Salah. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If a servant (of Allah) is ill or on a journey, they will receive the same reward of whatever good deeds they used to do while they were healthy or at home.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari

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in his Sahih) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said in the Battle of Tabuk: ﴾In Madinah, there are some people (who were with you all the time); you did not travel any portion of the journey nor crossed any valley but they were with you; they have been detained by a (Shar`y) excuse.﴿ According to another narration, he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾...but they shared the reward with you.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

When a person comes while the Imam is reciting the final Tashahhud, it is recommended to join him due to the generality of the following Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has been pronounced, do not run to it, but walk in tranquility and pray what you are in time for, and complete what you have missed.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Also, there is no harm in sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) if they start another congregation.

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From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to our honorable brother, may Allah guide him and me to comprehend the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and Qur'an, Amen!

As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) I have received your letter with the questions included. Following is the text of the questions and answers thereto:

Q 1: If someone joins the Salah while the Imam is performing Ruku` (bowing), will he be credited as having performed that Rak`ah or not?

A: Concerning this issue, scholars (may Allah be merciful with them) had two different views. First, he will not be regarded as having caught the Rak`ah, because he missed the recitation of Al-Fatihah which is an obligation for Salah. This view was reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah and supported by Al-Bukhari in his book entitled "Juz' Al-Qira'ah (Section on the recitation)". He ascribed this to the supporters of the opinion that the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) has to recite Al-Fatihah. The same opinion is cited in `Awn Al-Ma`bud. Similarly, this view is ascribed to Ibn Khuzaymah and a group of the followers of the Shafi`y School of Jurisprudence. Furthermore, Al-Shawkany in his book "Nayl-ul-Awtar" advocated this view and explained its proofs.

Second: He is regarded as having performed the Rak`ah. Al-Hafizh Ibn `Abdul-Bar narrated this view on the authority of `Ali, Ibn Mas`ud, Zayd ibn Thabit and Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them). He also related the same from the majority of scholars including the Four Imams (Abu Hanifah, Malik, Al-Shafi`y, and Ahmad), Al-Awza`y, Al-Thawry, Isaq, and Abu-Thawr. In a separate treatise, Al-Shawkany supported this view. The author of `Awn Al-Ma`bud cited this treatise. This view is the preponderant opinion according to the Hadith reported on the authority of Abu Bakrah, which was related by Al-Bukhari. In this Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the Rak`ah (i.e. he joined at Ruku`). Had it been obligatory, he would have commanded him to perform it, because it is not permissible to delay the clarification beyond the time of need. As for his saying in this report: ﴾May Allah make you more keen but do not do that again,﴿ it means that the Muslim should not bow before reaching the row. He is obliged to join the Imam regardless of the latter's state. Among the proofs raised by the majority of scholars is the Hadith related by Abu Dawud, Ibn Khuzaymah, Al-Daraqutany, and Al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾When you come to Salah while we are prostrating, prostrate yourselves and do not count it one Rak`ah. He who catches a Rak`ah of the Salah catches the (congregational) Salah.﴿ According to the narration of Ibn Khuzaymah,

Al-Daraqutany, and Al-Bayhaqy, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who catches a Rak`ah of the Salah, he in fact catches it before the Imam stands fully erect from Ruku`.﴿ This Hadith is a clear proof that supports the view of the majority of scholars in many ways. First, the Prophet (peace be upon him) affirmed that one who joins the congregation while the Imam is in Sujud (prostration) does not catch a Rak`ah, which means that one is counted as having performed a Rak`ah when he joins in Ruku`. Second, when the term "Rak`ah" is mentioned with the term Sujud, it means Ruku`. There are different Hadith conveying this meaning. For example, the following Hadith was reported on the authority of Al-Bara' who said: ﴾I observed the Salah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and saw his standing, his bowing, then going back to the standing posture after bowing, and his prostration after Ruku`.﴿ Another example is the Hadith on the solar eclipse in which the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed four Ruku`s and four Sujuds (in two Rak`ahs).﴿ That is to mean he (peace be upon him) performed four times of Ruku`. Third, the phrase which was used in the report related by Ibn Khuzaymah, Al-Daraqutany and Al-Bayhaqy: ﴾before the Imam stands fully erect from Ruku`﴿ is a clear proof that Rak`ah means Ruku`. Concerning the relevant Hadith reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, it was reported through two reliable narrators by whom the evidence can be established according to the rules of Mustalah Al-Hadith (Hadith terminology). Al-Nawawy (may Allah be merciful with him) in the commentary on Al-Muhadhab, [vol.4, p.215]

said, "The Rak`ah is counted if one joins the Ruku` is the correct opinion which was accepted by Al-Shafi`y and the majority of Shafi`y scholars and supported by the majority of Fiqh and Hadith scholars. There is a false weak view stating that the Rak`ah is not counted. This view was related by the author of the Tatimmah, i.e. Supplement, from Imam Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah one of the senior Hadith jurists. Al-Rafi`y also ascribed this view to him and to Abu Bakr Al-Sabghy of our fellow Shafi`y scholars. The author of the Tatimmah commented that this is not true, because the scholars of different countries agreed that the Rak`ah is counted by joining Ruku`. Thus, the difference among the later generations is not considered."

Moreover, in his book entitled Al-Talkhis, Al-Hafizh Ibn Hajar related from Ibn Khuzaymah what indicated his agreement with the majority of scholars concerning the view that the Rak`ah is counted when one joins Ruku`. Allah knows best.

Q: If someone joins the congregational Salah while the Imam is in the final Tashahhud, will he attain the reward of congregational Salah or not?

A: The latecomer does not attain the reward of the congregational Salah unless he catches at least one Rak`ah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever catches a Rak`ah of Salah has indeed caught the Salah.﴿ However, anyone who has a Shar`y excuse, such as an illness that prevents him from attending the congregation, will receive the full reward of congregational Salah. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If a servant (of Allah) is ill or on a journey, they will receive the same reward of whatever good deeds they used to do while they were healthy or at home.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih)

Q: If a person enters the Masjid (mosque) and joins the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) sitting to recite the final Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer) and after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), he completes Salah (Prayer), does this person receive the reward of congregational Salah?

A: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has been pronounced, do not run to it, but walk in tranquility and pray what you are in time for,

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and complete what you have missed.﴿

If a latecomer finds the Ma'mums sitting to recite the final Tashahhud, it is prescribed for him to join them. He should say Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), then sit to recite the Tashahhud. When the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) says Taslim, he should stand to complete Salah. As for receiving the reward of congregational Salah, this matter requires explanation. If he has a legal excuse, such as answering the call of nature, performing Wudu' (ablution), or was unwillingly detained by inescapable matter, he will receive the reward of congregational Salah. This is because a latecomer who has a legal excuse is like those who attend the congregational Salah from the beginning. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If a servant (of Allah) is ill or on a journey, they will receive the same reward of whatever good deeds they used to do while they were healthy or at home.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith) It is reported in the account of the Battle of Tabuk that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾In Madinah, there are some people (who were with you all the time); you did not travel any portion of the journey nor crossed any valley but they were with you.﴿ In another wording, he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾...but they shared the reward with you. It was said, "O Messenger of Allah, even though they are at Madinah?" He replied, "Yes, while they are in Madinah because they were held back by a valid excuse."﴿ According to another wording, he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"They were detained by illness."﴿

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Thus, if one is held back by a legal excuse, they will receive the reward like the one who joins the congregational Salah from the beginning. However, if a person is late due to laziness, they will not receive the reward of congregational Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever catches a Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) of Salah has indeed caught the Salah.﴿ This means that they will receive the reward of congregational Salah. Similarly, if one does not catch one Rak`ah in congregational Salah, they would not have its reward except if they were detained by a legal excuse as previously mentioned.

Permissibility of second congregation

for latecomers

Q: Is it permissible to offer Salah (Prayer) in a second congregation? What is the evidence for that? If one comes while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) is in the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer), should one sit and join the congregation or wait for another congregation? If one joins the Imam in the last Tashahhud, does one obtain the reward of congregation?

A: The second congregation is permissible. It may even be obligatory according to the general proofs concerning the one who misses the first congregation. Therefore, if a person comes to the Masjid (mosque)

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and people have finished Salah and finds another congregation, it is recommended for him to offer Salah in congregation and not to offer it alone. This may be obligatory for him in the existence of congregation due to the generality of evidence. One evidence is the following Hadith: (A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) after he had said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). He (peace be upon him) said, "Who will do good to this (man) and offer Salah along with him?") Generality of evidence indicates that congregational Salah is twenty-seven times more superior in reward than offering Salah alone. As for those who held that this superiority is confined to the first

congregation, they are asked for proof from a specific Hadith, for mere opinion does not stand as evidence.

The following Hadith affirms the same meaning. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The Salah offered in congregation is twenty-five times more superior (in reward) than Salah offered alone in one's home or place of business.﴿ If a person misses the first congregation and Allah helps him find another congregation in another Masjid or in the same Masjid, it is recommended to offer Salah with the congregation. As for what is reported that some of the Salaf (righteous predecessors), if they missed the congregation would return and offer Salah alone, this is Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings) from them and it should not take precedence over Shari`ah (Islamic law).

It was authentically reported on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) as related in the Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith of Imam Al-Bukhari that Anas once came and found that people had finished Salah. Thereupon, he gathered his companions and led them in congregational Salah. Anas is one of the fine companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and one of the best to be followed. Therefore,

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the basic rule is the validity of congregation. This is the basis and it is not to be abandoned except with evidence.

Moreover, it is reported that the Salaf used to offer a second congregation when they missed the first congregation and the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged those who were present to offer Salah with the one who missed the congregation, saying: ﴾Who will do good to this (man) and offer Salah along with him?﴿ The aim of this is to get the merits of congregational Salah. This Hadith is clear evidence regarding the issue in question. However, if one comes while the Imam is in the last Tashahhud, it is better for him to join the congregation with the Imam because of the general meaning of the following Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When you come to Salah, walk calmly and do not come hurriedly, and then pray what you catch and complete what you miss.﴿ The statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Pray what you catch﴿ applies to the last Rak`ah (unit of Prayer), Tashahhud, and even more. Accordingly, one should join the Imam and complete what is missed individually. The reward of congregation is granted by catching one Rak`ah, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever attends one Rak`ah (in congregation) is considered to have attended the entire Salah (in congregation).﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih)

However, if one has a legal excuse, one will not be deprived of the reward of

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congregation even if the entire Salah is missed; such as a person who goes out intending to offer Salah in congregation but experiences something which nullifies Wudu' (ablution) and, thus, has to go to perform Wudu', or a person who is unwillingly detained. Both are excused and have the reward of offering Salah in congregation owing to the legal excuse. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in an authentic Hadith: ﴾If a servant (of Allah) is ill or on a journey, Allah records for them the (good) acts that they used to do when they were healthy or at home.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said during the battle of Tabuk: ﴾Indeed, there are some people in Madinah never did you walk for a time or pass through a valley, except that they accompanied you (in reward). They were held back for a legal excuse.﴿ In another narration, he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾...but they shared the reward with you.﴿ ﴾They (the companions with the Prophet) said, "O Messenger of Allah, even though they are in Madinah?" He (peace be upon him) said, "Even though they are in Madinah as they were prevented by illness.﴿ This Hadith indicates that those who are excused receive the reward of

the participant and actual doer. This is a bounty from Allah and a favor He offers to His Servants.

Q: When a group of latecomers enter the Masjid (mosque), should they start a new congregation or not?

A: Yes, they may form a congregation and it is obligatory for them to offer Salah (Prayer) collectively if they miss the first congregation because of the general meanings of Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) and Hadith regarding the command to establish a congregation. However, its virtue is not equal to the virtue of the first congregation. It was authentically reported that a man entered the Masjid after the people had finished their Salah, thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾A man's Salah offered along with another is better than his Salah offered alone, and his Salah with two men is better than his Salah with one; but if there are more, it is more pleasing to Allah.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud and others with a good chain of narrators)

Ruling on establishing another congregation

after the first congregation is over

Q: Some say it is not permissible to establish another congregation in the Masjid (mosque) after the first congregation is over. Does this view have an origin? What is the correct view?

A: This view is not correct and has no origin in Islam as far as I know. Moreover, the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) indicates otherwise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Salah (Prayer) offered in congregation is twenty-seven times more meritorious than a Salah performed individually.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾A man's Salah offered along with another is better than his Salah offered alone.﴿ When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man entering the Masjid after the people had offered Salah, he said: ﴾If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.﴿

It is not permissible for a Muslim to be late for the congregational Salah; rather he must hasten to the Masjid when he hears the Adhan (call to Prayer). May Allah grant us success!

Q: A questioner from Riyadh asks: If a group of people enter a Masjid (mosque) and find that the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) has finished Salah (Prayer), is it permissible for them to form a second congregation?

A: There is no harm in doing so. If they find the Imam has concluded Salah, they may form another congregation as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did for one who entered the Masjid and found that he had missed the Salah. He (peace be upon him) said: (If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.) This is because offering Salah in congregation is better than offering it individually. If a person misses Salah and finds another congregation, he should join them. This was done by Anas and a group of Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet).

As for the second view which states that they should not form a second congregation but return home and offer Salah individually, it is a weak view and contradicts the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and Shari`ah (Islamic law) rulings. May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the ruling on forming another congregation for an obligatory Salah (Prayer) in a Masjid (mosque) which has a regular Imam and Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer)?

A: If one comes to the Masjid after people have finished their Salah, one must offer Salah in congregation with other latecomers and must not

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offer Salah individually. The congregation is required and the Messenger (peace be upon him) exhorted to it without confining the command to the first congregation. The Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Salah offered in congregation is twenty-seven times more meritorious than a Salah performed individually.﴿ In another narration, he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Twenty-five times more meritorious.﴿ Also, Ubay ibn Ka`b (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾A man's Salah offered along with another is better than his Salah offered alone, and his Salah with two men is better than his Salah with one, but if there are more, it is more pleasing to Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted).﴿ It was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he saw a man entering the Masjid after the people had finished their Salah, thereupon he said to some of those present: ﴾If anyone wants to do this man a favor, let him offer Salah with him.﴿

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Hence, some Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) stood and offered Salah with him. It was authentically reported from some Sahabah, such s Anas, that if one of them came to the Masjid after the people had finished their Salah, he would offer congregational Salah with others. May Allah grant us success!

A person who enters the Masjid when the congregation is in progress should join it

Q: Is it better for those, two or more persons, who enter the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is seated for the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in last unit of Prayer) to join the Imam or wait for others to come and pray with them, since several congregations are held at the Masjid?

A: It is prescribed for a person who enters the Masjid when congregational Salah is in progress to join the Imam regardless of what position the Imam is in, even if he is seated for the last Tashahhud. This is based on the generality of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾When you hear the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer), proceed to Salah with calmness and solemnity and do not rush. Then pray whatever parts you are able to catch up with and complete whatever you have missed.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim; the wording is that of Al-Bukhari)

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The latecomer does not attain the reward of the congregational Salah except when he catches up with at least one Rak`ah (unit of Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Anyone who catches up with one Rak`ah from Salah (in congregation) has caught up with the (whole) Salah.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) Anyone who has a Shar`y (Islamically lawful) excuse, such as an illness that prevents him from attending the congregation will receive the full reward of the congregational Salah because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When a servant (of Allah) falls ill or travels, the same reward of the good deeds they used to do when at home in good health is recorded for them.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari) Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said concerning those who did not participate in the Battle of Tabuk for a legal excuse: ﴾In Madinah there are people who, whenever you travelled any distance or crossed any valley, are with you. They have been detained by (Shar`y) excuse.﴿ According to another narration: ﴾'They share the reward with you.' The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Even though they are in Madinah?' He (peace be upon him) said, 'Even though they are in Madinah, because they were prevented by a legitimate excuse.'﴿ There are many Hadiths carrying this meaning.

It is prescribed for those who miss congregational Salah to form another congregation

Q: I entered the Masjid (mosque) after the Imam had ended the Salah (Prayer) and found two congregations making up their missed Rak`ahs (units of Prayer); each group was offering Salah in a different part of the Masjid and I did not know which was the first group; what should I do? With whom should I offer Salah? Is it permissible for me to inform the lesser congregation of the presence of the other group and advise them that it is better to interrupt their Salah and join the other congregation? Please guide us, may Allah reward you!

A: It is prescribed for you to join one of them and it is better to join the congregation with the larger number, because of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (A man's Salah offered with another is better than his praying alone, and his praying with two men is better than his praying with one man. The more people there are, the more beloved that is to Allah, the Most Exalted.) It is prescribed for those who miss Salah in congregation to offer Salah collectively and not to offer it individually, because of the mentioned Hadith.

This is the basic rule which should not be violated as long as one is able to comply with it. May Allah grant us success!

Maghrib Prayer for latecomers

Q: What is the ruling when one joins the congregational Salah (Prayer) of Maghrib (Sunset) during the final Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer) then the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) ends Salah? Should one offer one Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) then sit to recite the first Tashahhud or offer two Rak`ahs and sit for the first Tashahhud and then offer the third Rak`ah. Could you kindly advise?

A: It is permissible for those who join the Imam during the last Tashahhud or in Sujud (prostration) to complete Salah with him. When the Imam ends Salah, the latecomer should offer two Rak`ahs, sit for the first Tashahhud, and then perform the third Rak`ah. This is the proper manner of performing Maghrib for those who miss the entire Salah. As for those who miss one Rak`ah, when the Imam ends Salah, they should offer one Rak`ah as their second, sit for the first Tashahhud then perform the third and complete the Salah. May Allah grant us success!

The extra Rak`ah offered by the Imam is not counted for a latecomer

Q: In case the latecomer joins the Imam in the last two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) then realizes that the Imam has offered a fifth Rak`ah, should they count the extra Rak`ah they offered with the Imam and pray only two Rak`ahs, or not count it and pray three Rak`ahs to complete their Salah?

A: The correct opinion is that the extra Rak`ah must not be counted, because it is invalid according to Shari`ah (Islamic law) ruling. It is obligatory on a praying person who knows that it is an additional Rak`ah not to follow the Imam. As for a latecomer, they must not count it in. Accordingly, the questioner must make up for three Rak`ahs, because actually they caught up with only one Rak`ah. May Allah grant us success!

Q: I caught up with the last two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of a four-Rak`ah Prayer with the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer) who forgetfully offered an extra Rak`ah. I have, thus, offered three Rak`ahs with the Imam, but should I have completed the two missed Rak`ahs or offer one only? It should be mentioned that the Imam said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) without offering Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) and when one of the worshippers alerted him to what happened, he faced the Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced for Prayer)

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and offered Sujud-ul-Sahw; however, I was standing to make up for the Rak`ahs I missed and did not offer Sujud-ul-Sahw with the Imam.

A: You should make up for the two Rak`ahs which you did not catch with the Imam, then offer Sujud-ul-Sahw. As for the additional Rak`ah offered by the Imam forgetfully, it is not counted.

Offering Faridah behind an Imam offering Nafilah

Q: What is the ruling on a person who offers a Faridah (obligatory) Prayer while following an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who is offering a Nafilah (supererogatory) Prayer?

A: This is permissible, for it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) led a group of his Sahabah (Companions) in two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of Salat-ul-Khawf (Prayer in times of fear), then he led the other group in the same Salah. Thus, the second Salah was a Nafilah for him. It was also authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from Mu`adh (may Allah be pleased with him) that he used to offer the Faridah of `Isha' (Night) Prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him)

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and then return to lead his people in the same `Isha' Prayer, which is counted as Nafilah for him and Faridah for them.

Q: What do you think of the Salah (Prayer) of a worshipper who offers a Faridah (obligatory Prayer) behind another offering a Nafilah (Supererogatory Prayer)?

A: There is nothing wrong in offering obligatory Salah led by a person who is offering a Nafilah. It was authentically reported that in some forms of Salat-ul-Khawf (Prayer in times of fear), the Prophet (peace be upon him) led a group of his Sahabah (Companions) in two Rak`ahs, ended Salah by Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), then he led another group in offering two Rak`ahs and offered Taslim. Thus, this indicates that the first Salah was a Faridah for him while the second was a Nafilah, whereas those who prayed behind him were offering the Faridah.

It was also authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) that he used to offer `Isha' (Night) Prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and then return to lead his people in this Faridah (i.e. `Isha' Prayer), which to them was Faridah while to him a Nafilah. Similarly, if a person attends Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) without having offered the obligatory `Isha' Prayer, it is permissible for them to offer `Isha' Prayer with those offering Tarawih, so as to gain the reward of congregational Salah, then stand and complete Salah when the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer) offers Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer).

Q: What is the ruling on a man who offers congregational Salah (Prayer) in a Masjid (mosque) then offers another one in another Masjid without a specific reason for that and persists in doing so?

A: I know of no Shar`y (Islamic legal) evidence in support of offering multiple congregational Salahs in more than one Masjid on a regular basis. It appears to me that this should not be done, since it is inconsistent with the way of Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them). It is also inconsistent with the narration about Mu`adh, who used to offer the obligatory Salah with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and then return back to his people to lead them in the same Salah. In the case in question, the person does not lead the congregation, but just joins it. Since there is a significant difference between the two situations, it is impermissible to draw Qiyas (analogy) between them. The people in the second congregation may need a more knowledgeable Imam who has memorized more of the Qur'an to lead and teach them, unlike an ordinary person in a congregation, who is not needed.

Ruling on offering Tarawih with the intention of offering `Isha'

Q: If a Muslim comes to the Masjid (mosque) and finds the congregation praying Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) while they have not yet prayed `Isha', should they join them intending to offer `Isha' (Night) Prayer?

A: There is nothing wrong with joining them with the intention of offering `Isha' Prayer, according to the more correct of the two scholarly opinions. When the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer) offers Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), they should stand and complete their Salah. It is authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith on the authority of Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) that he used to pray `Isha', then go back to his people and lead them in the same Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not disapprove of that. This indicates that it is permissible to offer Faridah (obligatory Prayer) behind someone who is offering a Nafilah (supererogatory Prayer). It is also related in the Sahih that in some forms of Salat-ul-Khawf (Prayer in times of fear) the Prophet (peace be upon him) led one group in offering two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer), offered Taslim and led the other group in praying the same Salah, then offered Taslim again. Thus, the first one was a Faridah for him and the second one was a Nafilah, while they were offering the Faridah. Allah is the Grantor of success!

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Difference of praying intention between Imam and Ma'mum

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to our dear brother `A.R.N. May Allah protect you! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reference to your Fatwa request registered in the Department of Scholarly Research and Ifta' under no. 1114 dated 21/3/1407 A.H. **in which you ask about the legal ruling when you miss any Jahri Salah (Prayer recited audibly) and remember this only at the time of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer; while determined to make up for the missed Salah, you entered the Masjid (mosque) to find that Zhuhr Prayer is being performed in congregation. You also inquired about the ruling on delaying Zhuhr Prayer and finding a group of people performing `Asr Prayer in congregation?** I inform you that it is obligatory to offer Salahs in order. You may join the congregational Salah with the intention of making up for the missed Salah and then after ending it perform the presently due Salah. As for missing a Jahri Salah, there is flexibility in making up for it. Yet it is better to make it up audibly, because making up should be identical to the original action.

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May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him! He is All-Hearing and Responsive. May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!

General Chairman of

the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

Q: If a man followed another in Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, then discovered that he was praying `Asr (Afternoon), not Maghrib; should he complete the Salah (Prayer) with that person or else leave him at the third Rak`ah?

A: If a Muslim joins another performing a four-Rak`ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units) with the intention of performing Maghrib, he should remain seated at the third Rak`ah and when the person acting as Imam pronounces Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), he should as well. This case may occur frequently during travel and when combining two Salahs at place of residence due to rainfall. Thus, when a Muslim joins another performing `Isha' and he has not yet prayed Maghrib (Sunset), he must join Salah with the intention of performing Maghrib. When the Imam stands to perform the fourth Rak`ah, he should remain seated at the third Rak`ah where he should recite Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer) and continue supplicating Allah till the person acting as his Imam pronounces Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), then he should pronounce Taslim following the Imam. This Salah will be sufficient on his part, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Actions depend upon intentions.﴿ Thus, each of them will be rewarded according to his intention based on the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: ﴾Actions depend upon intentions, and each person will have but that which he intended.﴿

The same applies when a person joins a traveling Imam who is performing `Isha' shortened to two Rak`ahs, while he intends to perform Maghrib.

The Imam will pronounce Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) at the end of the second Rak`ah, whereas the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) should stand up and perform the third Rak`ah. This Salah on his part is valid, because he has his own intention and the Imam has his. He intends to perform Maghrib that consists of three Rak`ahs, whereas the Imam intends to shorten `Isha' because he is traveling and pronounces Taslim at the end of the second Rak`ah. The Ma'mum who has intended to perform Maghrib should stand up and perform the third Rak`ah. The same ruling applies to a person who performs Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer behind a person offering 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer. For example, when a person joins a group combining two Salahs during travel thinking that they are performing Zhuhr Prayer, and after joining them he realizes that they are performing 'Asr Prayer while he is performing Zhuhr Prayer. In such a case, his Salah is valid because he has his own intention and they have theirs. This is the correct opinion based on the Hadith "Actions depends upon intentions".

It is reported in an authentic Hadith that Mu`adh (may Allah be pleased with him) used to perform the obligatory `Isha' Prayer behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) and then return to his people and lead them in `Isha'. This Salah is thus considered Nafilah (supererogatory) for him and Faridah (obligatory act) for them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not disapprove of that. It has been authentically reported also that during Salat-ul-Khawf (Prayer in times of fear), the Prophet (peace be upon him) first led one of the two groups in two Rak`ahs and then led the other group in two Rak`ahs. Thus, the second two Rak`ahs he performed with the second group was Nafilah for him

and Faridah for them.

Ruling on offering Maghrib Prayer behind someone offering `Isha' Prayer

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother in Islam, R. H. Sh. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Referring to your Fatwa request registered in the Department of Scholarly Research and Ifta' under no. 1692, and dated in 2/5/1407 A.H. which reads the following: **"Once people combined Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and `Isha' (Night) Prayer due to rains and I caught up with them while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) was in the second Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) of Isha' that is offered as Jahri (recited aloud). I joined the Imam with the intention of offering Maghrib Prayer. The Imam sat for the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second unit of Prayer) then stood and offered the remaining last two Rak`ahs of `Isha'. So I realized that it was `Isha' Prayer and that I missed the first Jahri Rak`ah, as Maghrib Prayer includes two Jahri Rak`ahs. Do the Rak'ahs I offered with them count as sufficient for Maghrib Prayer, then I can offer `Isha' Prayer?**

Also, suppose I join the congregation in `Isha' Prayer from the beginning while I did not offer Maghrib Prayer, should I remain seated when the Imam stands to offer the fourth Rak`ah of `Isha', since Maghrib Prayer is three Rak`ahs and `Isha' Prayer is four when I realize that it is `Isha' Prayer? When is it permitted to combine prayers? Please advise, may Allah reward you!

A: Be informed that the three Rak`ahs of 'Isha' you offered with the Imam count for the Maghrib Prayer which you missed. On the same basis, if a person offers Maghrib Prayer behind an Imam offering `Isha' Prayer and joins the congregation from the beginning of prayer, he is to sit after finishing the third Rak`ah. He should not follow the Imam in the fourth Rak`ah. It is better for him to wait until the Imam pronounces Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) and make Taslim following him. May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him! He is All-Hearing and Responsive. May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!

General Chairman

of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

Q: We may combine Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers due to rainfall. Some may arrive while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) is offering `Isha' Prayer and join the congregation thinking that the Imam is offering Maghrib Prayer, what should they do?

A: These worshippers should sit after the third Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) and recite Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) and make Du`a' (supplication) and then pronounce Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) with the Imam. After that, they should offer `Isha' Prayer. They can thus earn the merit of praying in congregation and comply with the obligatory order of performing Salahs. If the Imam precedes them with one Rak`ah, they should offer the remaining Rak`ahs with him intending to pray Maghrib and it will suffice for Maghrib Prayer.

However, if the Imam precedes them with more than one Rak`ah, they should pray with him whatever parts of Salah they catch up and complete what they miss. Similarly, if they know that the Imam is offering `Isha' Prayer, they should join the congregation intending to pray Maghrib, if they have not prayed it, and then do as previously stated. After that they should offer `Isha', according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars.

Q: It is well known that if a person joins the congregation in `Isha' (Night) Prayer from the beginning intending to perform Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer one should sit after the third Rak`ah (unit of Prayer), recite the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer) and wait to

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pronounce Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) with the Imam. I want to ask about the case when a person joins the congregation after the Imam offers the first Rak`ah of `Isha' Prayer while he intends to offer Maghrib Prayer, should he pronounce Taslim with the Imam, as he offered three Rak`ahs which is the number of Rak`ahs of Maghrib Prayer, or what should one do? May Allah reward you!

A: If a Muslim joins the congregation in `Isha' Prayer after the Imam has offered one Rak`ah and he has not offered Maghrib Prayer yet, the three Rak`ahs he catches with the Imam are sufficient on his part for Maghrib Prayer, according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars. Allah is the Grantor of success!

Not having offered Maghrib Prayer while `Isha' Prayer is offered in congregation

Q: I entered the Masjid (mosque) while the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) of `Isha' (Night) Prayer was announced. Before I started offering Salah (Prayer) I remembered that I had not performed Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer. Should I have offered Maghrib and then joined the congregation, or join the congregation first and after that offer Maghrib Prayer?

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A: If you enter the Masjid (mosque) while `Isha' Prayer is being offered and you remember that you have not offered Maghrib Prayer, you should join the congregation with the intention of offering Maghrib Prayer. When the Imam stands to offer the fourth Rak`ah of `Isha', you are to remain seated, recite the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer) and other supplications, and wait for the Imam. When the Imam pronounces Taslim (salutation ending prayer), repeat the Taslim after him. There is no problem regarding the difference of intentions between the Imam and those offering Salah behind him, according to the most correct opinion of the scholars. Likewise, if you offer Maghrib Prayer alone and join the congregation in `Isha' Prayer, it is permissible as well.

Q: I forgetfully offered `Isha' (Night) Prayer in congregation while I had not performed Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer. After I returned to my house, I offered Maghrib Prayer. Is my Salah (Prayer) valid?

A: Your Salah is valid due to your forgetfulness. You offered `Isha' Prayer with the congregation in the Masjid (mosque) while you forgot that you missed Maghrib Prayer. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error﴿ It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said (concerning the former Ayah) that Allah responded, saying, "I have done so." Allah is the Grantor of success!

Entering the Masjid while the Imam is performing 'Asr Prayer while one has not offered Zhuhr Prayer

Q: If a person misses an obligatory Salah such as Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer for example and remembers it when the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer is being performed, should he join the congregation with the intention of `Asr Prayer or Zhuhr Prayer? Should he offer Zhuhr Prayer alone first and after that offer `Asr Prayer? What is the meaning of the scholars' statement: "If a person fears that he may miss the due Salah, order becomes no longer obligatory." Does the fear of missing Salah in congregation waive the obligation of following order?

A: It is prescribed for the person in question to join the congregation in the presently due Salah with the intention of Zhuhr Prayer. After that, he should offer `Asr Prayer owing to the obligation of observing the respective order. The order should not be neglected owing to the fear of missing the congregation.

As for the scholars' statement: "If a person fears that the time of the presently due Salah may elapse, order becomes no longer obligatory", it means that it is necessary for a person who misses an obligatory Salah to offer the missed Salah first before presently due Salah. If the time of the presently due Salah is so short and may elapse, then in this case, they should offer it first, such as if a person misses `Isha' (Night) Prayer and does not remember it except when it is almost sunrise while they have also not offered Fajr (Dawn) Prayer of this day yet.

In this case, they have to begin with Fajr Prayer before the elapse of its due time, for that time is appointed for it. After that, they should offer the missed Salah.

Q: If a person slept without performing `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and woke up at the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) for Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, should he join the congregation with his intention settled on performing Maghrib to gain the reward of performing Salah (Prayer) in congregation and then perform `Asr Prayer, or should he observe the order of Salahs, performing `Asr Prayer by himself and then perform Maghrib? What is the solution?

A: If there is enough time to perform `Asr Prayer by himself and observe the order of Salah without losing Maghrib, then this is obligatory upon him. Thus, he should hasten to perform Asr Prayer immediately and then join them in performing Maghrib. If this is not possible (due to lack of time), then the preponderant opinion is that he should join them in performing Maghrib Prayer with his intention settled on performing `Asr Prayer. Upon saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) by the Imam, such a person should stand up and perform the fourth Rak`ah (unit of Prayer). He should perform Maghrib Prayer after that to follow the correct order of the two Salahs and to act upon all evidence.

Joining Funeral Prayer behind an Imam thinking that he is offering obligatory Salah

Q: I entered the Masjid (mosque) to perform Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer. Finding people performing Salah, I performed Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and joined them in Salah to find out, shortly after, that that they were performing Janazah (Funeral) Prayer.

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Being confused, I ended my Salah and then performed Takbirat-ul-Ihram once more intending to perform Zhuhr Prayer. I did not complete Janazah Prayer with them. What is the ruling on what I did? Is such a conduct on my part wrong? Please answer my question.

A: In this situation, you should form the intention of offering Janazah Prayer once you know that it is a Janazah Prayer, and then say Takbirat-ul-Ihram, and complete the Janazah Prayer with them. You should also make up for the number of Takbirat (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") you missed, if any. Then you should perform Zhuhr Prayer after that, because once Janazah Prayer is over, you cannot make up for it, which is not the case with Zhuhr Prayer where enough time is available. May Allah grant us all success!

Ruling on offering the Zhuhr Prayer with the intention of Jumu`ah Prayer

Q: I offered on the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer with the intention of Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, but the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) offered Zhuhr Prayer; is my Salah valid despite the difference in intention between the Imam and the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer)?

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A: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah. You have to repeat the Salah with the intention of offering Zhuhr Prayer, for pilgrims are not required to perform Jumu`ah Prayer on the Day of `Arafah; rather, they should perform Zhuhr Prayer as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did in his Hajj which coincided with Friday.

Women should stand behind men in congregational Salah

Q: How should a man and his wife perform congregational Salah (Prayer)?

A: It depends; sometimes it is possible to offer the Nafilah (supererogatory) Salah in congregation, as when a man prays with his wife and family Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon), Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) or Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). Here he should stand alone while the women stand behind him, even if he prays with his wife, she should stand behind him, not beside him. Similarly, in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan), women should stand behind the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). Also, when led by a male member of a household, women, whether one or more, should pray behind him. It is permissible for women when attending the obligatory Salahs in the Masjid (mosque) to pray behind the Imam and male Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer). Women during Salah should not stand beside a man - husband, father or anyone else.

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Women should stand behind men whether in Faridah (obligatory Prayer) or Nafilah, at night or day, as indicated by the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet).

The position of standing is the same in all these forms of Salah; when a woman prays with a man or men, she should always pray behind him or them; she should never stand beside him or them. With regard to women praying in congregation, the female Imam is to stand in the middle, rather than in the front in order not to behave like men.

Men and women of the same family praying together

Q: When I travel I see people on the road offering Salah (Prayer) in groups and others praying individually. This is - praise be to Allah - so pleasant. However, I notice that men pray by themselves and women pray by themselves though they belong to one family. Is it not better that they all, i.e., men and women offer congregational Salah together

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in order to get its reward? Guide us, may Allah reward you well!

A: This matter is flexible; if men and women offer congregational Salah together, it is good, and women should stand behind the men. However, if men offered congregational Salah on their own and women offered congregational Salah on their own, there is nothing wrong with this. May Allah grant us success!

The best rows for women are the first if separated from men's rows by a barrier

Q: We are a group of women who offer Salah (Prayer) in Ramadan at the Masjid (mosque) in a place separated from men where they can neither see us nor can we see them. I noticed that some Muslim sisters do not complete the first rows. Some of them, to support their argument, cited the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him): ﴾The best rows for men (in Salah) are the front rows and the worst are the back rows. The best rows for women are the back rows and the worst are the front rows.﴿ **I replied that this Hadith refers to the time**

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when women used to pray behind men without a barrier, but now the situation is quite different. However, they did not respond. Kindly guide us to what we should do in this regard as this is the case in many Masjids (mosques). May Allah reward you well!

A: The Hadith cited in the question is Sahih (authentic), but it is interpreted according to the scholars as meaning what you said, i.e., when there was not a barrier between men and women. Accordingly, if women are veiled from men by a barrier, then the best of the rows for women as those for men are the first rows and the worst for them are the last as for men. They should complete the rows one after another respectively and fill in the gaps just as men do, based on the generality of the Hadiths authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in this regard. May Allah guide all to what He likes and what pleases Him!

Position where a boy should stand when praying with the Imam and whether puberty is a condition for standing in the same row

Q: If a man leads two boys or more in Salah (Prayer), should they stand behind him or to his right? Is puberty a condition for letting the boy stands in the same row?

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A: It is prescribed to let them stand behind him just like the Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions), if they are seven years old or more. Similarly, if they are a boy and a Mukallaf, they should stand behind him, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) led Anas and an orphan boy in Salah and made them stand behind him when he (peace be upon him) visited the grandmother of Anas. Similarly, when Jabir and Jabbar, from the Ansar (Helpers, inhabitants of Madinah who supported the Prophet), stood beside him in Salah, he (peace be upon him) made them stand behind him.

With regard to one person, whether a man or boy, he is to stand to the right of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). When Ibn `Abbas stood to the left of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night), he made him stand to his right.

Likewise, Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) offered Nafilah (supererogatory) Salahs with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Prophet (peace be upon him) made him stand to his right. With regard to one or more women, they should stand behind the men and they are not permitted to stand in one row with the Imam or with the men behind the Imam, for when the Prophet prayed with Anas and the orphan, he made Um Sulaym stand behind them, though she is the mother of Anas.

It is prescribed for individual Ma'mum to stand to the right of the Imam aligning with him

Q: It is well known that if the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) is one individual,

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he should stand to the right of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). However, is it permissible for him to step backward a little bit as some do?

A: It is prescribed for the Ma'mum, if he is a single person, to stand to the right of the Imam aligning side by side with him. There is no evidence in Shari`ah (Islamic law) to support otherwise. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on the Imam moving forward when there is no place for the Ma'mums to step back

Q: If two people are offering congregational Salah (Prayer) and a third one joins them after they had started, then, as there is no place for one of them to step back, the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer) stepped forward. Is it permissible for the Imam to step forward, especially that we know from the Hadith that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) instructed that in this case one of the two people should step back rather than the Imam?

A: If the Imam stands in a place where he can pray and the other two people can step back and pray behind him, they should do so. On the other hand, if he stands in a place where

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they cannot step back, then he should step forward and there is nothing wrong with that. However, it is prescribed in this case for both men to stand behind him, whether he steps forward or they step backward. If they offer Salah standing in the same row, having one person standing at the right side of the Imam and the other standing at his left side, or both standing at his right side, their Salah will also be valid, but they will have left a preferable act. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was offering Salah individually, then Jabir and Jabbar came and stood at his right and left hand sides, but he made them stand behind him. The same happened with Anas and the orphan whom he also made to stand behind him.

Straightening the rows of Salah

Q: Some people do not pay any attention to the matter of straightening the rows. They may move forward, backward, or leave a wide gap between them. What is the ruling on this? Does it have any effect on their Salah (Prayer)? What is the duty of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) regarding this?

A: It is obligatory on the people praying to straighten the rows and fill the gaps by standing close to one another and attaching their feet to each other without causing inconvenience to people. It is the duty of the Imam to notify them of that, order them to arrange the rows,

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and adjust them in accordance with the Prophet's command: (Straighten your rows and close the gaps.) He (peace be upon him) also said: (Straighten your rows, for the straightening of rows is a part of the perfection of Salah.) Thus, every Muslim should observe those around him and cooperate with them to straighten the rows and fill the gaps. Allah is the Grantor of success!

Q: Some Imams do not concern themselves with straightening the rows. They depend on just saying "straighten and align your rows" then pronounce Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) without checking those performing Salah behind them to ensure they have aligned the rows, which can prevent some from joining in saying Takbirat-ul-Ihram immediately after the Imam. What is your advice, may Allah reward you?

A: It is obligatory for every Imam to be keen on straightening the rows in Salah, to order the Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer) to straighten the rows, and not to pronounce Takbirat-ul-Ihram till they see that they have straightened their rows, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered to do so and because straightening the rows is part of the perfection of Salah.

Effect of moving to fill gaps in rows during Salah on the validity of Salah

Q: A question on the gaps in rows during Salah (Prayer): Does moving to fill them affect one's Salah or not?

A: It is Mashru` (Islamically permissible) to fill them; the worshipper's moving to do so is Mashru` and does not affect the validity of Salah. If a praying person notices that there is a gap in a row and one pulls one's brother close to him to fill the gap or if one comes from behind (i.e. from the following row) and fill the gap, all such actions are Mashru`. This does not have the slightest effect on one's Salah, rather this is part of the perfection of Salah, because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered that gaps within rows be filled.

Q: It is common here in KSA for worshippers not to fill the gaps within the rows and also to recite the Qur'an out loud. Does this contradict the saying of the Messenger (peace be upon him): ﴾Let not some of you raise their voices above others during recitation (of the Qur'an).﴿ **Please, correct these two matters, may Allah reward you!**

A: Not filling the gaps is impermissible. Rather, it is obligatory to fill them to comply with

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the order of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: ﴾Fill the gaps and stand close in the rows.﴿

It is an obligation on the praying person noticing this to advise his brothers and ask them to fill the gaps. It is obligatory on the Imams to command those performing Salah in congregation behind them to do so in accordance with the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to obey his command (peace be upon him).

As for reciting the Qur'an out loud while waiting to perform Salah, this is not permissible. Rather, the believer is only permitted to recite in a low voice, so as not to distract those around him and others reciting near him. ﴾This is because when the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered the Masjid (mosque) one night there was groups of worshippers, so he told them, 'You all are privately talking to Allah, so let not some of you recite louder than others.'﴿

Completing the front rows first upon entering the Masjid

Q: A brother from Makkah Al-Mukarramah asks:

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I noticed that some people when entering Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) and find that the Imam has already started performing the obligatory Salah (Prayer), they do not join the Imam and stand at the nearest place they can reach upon entering the sanctuary. Rather, they continue walking so as to perform Salah at the courtyard of Al-Masjid Al-Haram, even if this results in missing some Rak`ahs (units of Prayer). Is it permissible to do so? If this is impermissible, would you advise those who do this, may Allah reward you?

A: Believers are required upon entering the Masjid (mosque) to complete the front rows first, then the next and so on, and to fill the gaps, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered this, even if it results in missing some Rak`ahs. This is based on the Hadith authentically related in Sahih Al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Bakrah (may Allah be pleased with him) (That he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Masjid (mosque) while he (peace be upon him) was bowing in Salah (Prayer). He bowed, and then joined the row. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, 'May Allah increase your zeal (for the good)! But do not do this again.')

It was also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them): ('Why do you not align yourselves in rows as angels do before their Lord.' They said, 'O Messenger of Allah! How do the angels align themselves before their Lord?' He (peace be upon him) said,

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'They fill the front rows first and stand close to one another in the rows.') There are many Hadiths carrying this meaning. May Allah grant us success!

Rows in congregational Salahs start from the center, behind the Imam, and the right side is better than the left side

Q: Should the row begin from the right or from behind the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer)? Is it prescribed to achieve balance between the right and left so that it may be said, "Make the row equal on both sides" as many Imams do?

A: The row should start from the middle, from behind the Imam. And the right side of each row is better than the left. A new row should not be started until the one in front is completed. There is nothing wrong with there being more people on the right side of a row, and there is no need to make the row equal on both sides; rather, the command to do this is contrary to the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). But people should not form a second row until the first is complete, or form a third row until the second is complete, and so on, because it is proven that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) enjoined that.

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Showing keenness to join the first row and stand close to the Imam

Q: I notice in some Masjids (mosques) that when entering to perform Salah (Prayer) and before the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer), many people do not proceed to the front rows nor stand immediately behind the Imam. Rather, they scatter in the Masjid to the right and the left and at the back and the front. When the Iqamah is being called, they come close to one another and form rows, but they are not keen on standing near the Imam. Is their behavior in accordance with the Sunnah? If not, is there any advice that you could give them?

A: Upon entering the Masjid, the Muslim is required to proceed to the first row and draw near the Imam. Once the first row is complete, the Muslim is required to proceed to the second row, and so on. If any row is incomplete, then it should be the last one. This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) guided and commanded his Ummah (nation based on one creed) to do. The right side of every row is better than its left. Among the Hadiths related in this regard is the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying to

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his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be Pleased with them all): ('Why do you not align yourselves in rows as angels do before their Lord?' They said, 'O Messenger of Allah! How do the angels align themselves before their Lord?' He (peace be upon him) said, 'They fill the front rows first and stand close to one another in the rows.') May Allah grant us success!

Weakness of the Hadith: (Those who fill the left side of rows (during Salah) shall have a double reward)

Q: When Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) for `Isha' (Night) Prayer was pronounced, the right side of the first row was complete and there were few worshippers in the left side of the row, so the worshippers were asked to make the row even by standing in the left side. So, one of them said that the right side is the best. But someone replied by citing the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which says: (Those who fill the left side of rows (during Salah) shall have a double reward.) **Could you kindly advise on this issue?**

A: It was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) a Hadith which indicates that the right side of every row is better than the left side. But it is not permissible to tell the worshippers: "Make the row even on both sides (right and left)." There is nothing wrong in the right side being more than the left side in order to gain more reward.

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As for the Hadith which was mentioned by some of the attendants: "Those who fill the left side of rows (during Salah) shall have a double reward." It is a Da`if (weak) Hadith recorded by Ibn Majah through a weak Isnad (chain of narration).

Reserving places in the Masjid is not permissible

Q: Someone asks about reserving places in the Masjids (mosques) on Fridays behind the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) for certain people and preventing others from sitting in them, and about the position of worshippers behind the Imam when offering Janazah (Funeral) Prayer.

A: Places in the Masjid are for those who come first and it is not permissible to reserve a place in the Masjid for anyone. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If people were to know what is in the Call to Salah and the first row (of reward), then they found no other way but to draw lots over it, they would draw lots.﴿ Therefore, reserving places is impermissible and it is regarded as unlawful seizure of a place over which one has no right. The person who arrives first is more deserving and entitled to the place. Thus, worshippers will come early to Salah and secure a place for themselves.

As for Janazah Prayer, people should stand behind the Imam. However, there is some flexibility with regard to alignment of rows in this Salah.

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It is related by Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Majah (may Allah be merciful to them) on the authority of Malik ibn Hubayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Any Muslim who dies and three rows of Muslims offer (Janazah) Prayer for him, will surely be entitled (to reward and Paradise).﴿ Therefore, when Malik, the narrator of the Hadith (may Allah be pleased with him), found a small congregation he would divide people into three rows, even if the rows were not complete.

Ruling on offering Salah in the Masjid courtyard while congregational Salah is held inside and on Du`a' after Iqamah

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable Muslim brother, A. F. M. May Allah protect you!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!):

I would like to refer to your Fatwa request registered in the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta' under no. 1732 on 24 / 4 / 1408 AH., in which you ask about the ruling on offering Salah (Prayer) in the Masjid courtyard while there is a congregational Salah held inside and making Du`a' (supplication) after Iqamah (call to start the Prayer).

I inform you that there is nothing wrong in offering Salah in the Masjid courtyard if the whole congregation is offering Salah there. But if the congregation is performing the Salah inside the Masjid, it becomes permissible to offer congregational Salah in the courtyard when the Masjid is full and the rows are connected together; otherwise, it is obligatory to offer Salah with the people inside, because it is authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that

it is obligatory to complete the first row, then the second and so on.

There is nothing wrong in making Du`a' after Iqamah, unless it is taken as a regular habit, because we do not know of any transmitted reports on that.

May Allah guide all people to do what pleases Him. As-salamu `Alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

Ruling on offering Salah behind the Imam in the streets outside the Masjid

Q: Due to the crowd existing in some Masjids (mosques) on Fridays, which become full of worshippers, people try to find a place outside the Masjids, in nearby streets, to offer Salah behind the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer). What is your opinion on this? Will it make a difference if there is a parting road between those who offer the Salah (Prayer) and the Masjid?

A: There is nothing wrong with this as long as the rows are continuous. The same is true if the Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer) outside the Masjid are able to see some rows in front of them, even with the existence of some parting roads, it will not be wrong, since praying with the congregation is an obligation as long as one can see the Imam or some of the Ma'mums. However, it is impermissible for anyone to offer Salah in front of the Imam, for this is not the place for the Ma'mum to stand. Allah is the Grantor of success!

Ruling on offering Salah in the basement of a Masjid

Q: What is the ruling on offering Salah (Prayer) in the basement of a Masjid (mosque), if the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) cannot see either the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) or others who offer Salah behind him, but they hear him through an amplifier?

A: There is nothing wrong with that, if the basement is a part of the Masjid, for the general relevant evidence in this regard.

Q: We have a two-story Masjid (mosque); the upper level is assigned for men and the lower for women to enable them to offer congregational Salah (Prayer) with men. They do not see the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer) or the rows of men, but hear Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") through amplifiers. What is the ruling on their Salah in this case?

A: If the case is as mentioned, the Salah of all of them is valid as long as it exists in the Masjid and it is possible to follow the Imam by hearing his voice through the amplifier.

This is the more correct of the two scholarly opinions.

However, the issue becomes disputable when some of the Ma'mums (persons led by an Imam in Prayer) who are outside the Masjid cannot see either the Imam or other worshippers who are offering the Salah. Allah is the Grantor of success!

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Ruling on praying behind an Imam from outside the Masjid without being able to see him or any of the Ma'mums

Honorable brother Shaykh M.Kh.S. Nice, France. May Allah grant you success!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I read your telephonically posed question concerning the ruling on women praying behind the Imam (the one who leads a congregational Prayer), while they are on the ground floor of the Masjid (mosque) in one of the office rooms belonging to the charitable association.

A: As for women who offer Salah in a room on the ground floor with the congregation in the Masjid, they should not follow the Imam. It is a condition for anyone who is outside the Masjid and wants to pray behind the Imam to see the Imam or the Ma'mums (persons led by an Imam in Prayer), according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars. It is not enough to hear the Imam's voice, except for those who are inside the Masjid.

Kindly be informed. May Allah bless you and bestow upon us beneficial knowledge and righteous deed.

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He is All-Hearer, Ever Near. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

`Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz

Q: There is a fenced land to the north of our Masjid (mosque) that is adjacent to it. We suggest allocating it to be a Musalla (praying-place) for women to be able to offer Salah (Prayer) there during Ramadan. It is worth mentioning that women will not be able to see the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), but they can follow him by hearing his voice through microphones. Is this act permissible?

A: Scholars differ about the validity of their Salah in the said place, if they are unable to see the Imam or stand behind him, but will follow him by hearing his voice over the microphones. To be on the safe side, they should not offer Salah in this place, but should offer it in their homes until they find a suitable place inside or outside the Masjid where they are able to see the Imam or some Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer).

Legality of establishing Masjids in buildings

Q: Some Muslims in certain Muslim countries use the ground floor in a building

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as a Masjid (mosque) for offering Salah (Prayer) due to the lack of alternative places. Is this permissible? Answer us, may Allah reward you well!

A: We know of nothing wrong with that, according to general Shar`y (Islamic legal) evidence that indicates the permissibility of building Masjids and offering Salah in them. The objective can thus be achieved without causing any harm. Also, establishing Masjids in buildings will provide the facility of offering congregational Salahs when there is no access for people to offer Salah in one of Houses of Allah. This floor takes the ruling of a Masjid if its owner gives it as a Waqf (endowment) for this purpose. Allah is the Grantor of success!

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Ruling on performing Salah alone behind the rows of praying Muslims

From `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother Sh. `A. `A. May Allah protect you!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

With reference to your Fatwa request registered in the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta' under no. 3231 on 15/8/1407 A.H. in which you ask about our opinion regarding the view of Ibn Taymiyyah on the ruling of offering Salah individually behind the row.

I inform you that I perused the words of Shaykh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful to him), which you mentioned in the letter that indicate the permissibility of offering Salah individually behind the row when necessary, if one finds no one to stand with in the row. Undoubtedly, it is a strong view, but the more correct and consistent with the apparent meaning of the Sunnah is not to do so. This is due to three reasons: **First:** The generality of the Prophet's saying: ﴾There is no Salah (valid) for

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a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).﴿ He (peace be upon him) did not specify any case.

Second: The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded the one who offered Salah individually behind the row to repeat Salah and did not ask for more details whether he found someone to pray beside him or not. If the nonexistence of others who may form a row with him is a legal acceptable excuse, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have specified it. It is well known that delaying the explanation beyond the time of need is not permissible, according to the scholars.

Third: Adopting this view prevents the negligent attitude of offering Salah behind the row individually claiming that a person does not find space in the row. In most cases, if the praying person does not rush, he will find a space in the row or he may stand on the right side of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

Q: Is the Salah (Prayer) of a person who stands alone behind a row in congregational Salah valid? Is it permissible for one to draw a person from the first row so as not to stand alone in congregational Salah?

A: It is not permissible for a person to offer Salah while standing alone behind the row during congregational Salah, as it renders the Salah invalid according to the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).) Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man praying alone behind the row and he (peace be upon him) ordered him to repeat the Salah.

A Muslim should look for a gap in a row to stand in and if there is none, he may, if possible, stand right to the Imam. Otherwise, the worshipper should wait until someone comes so that both of them can form a row. If the congregational Salah ends and none has come, he or she must offer it individually. It is necessary for every Muslim to hasten to congregational Salah in the Masjid and be keen to join it from the beginning with other worshippers. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer – 'Asr).)

(And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (Anyone who hears the call (to Salah) and does not come to it, then there is no Salah (valid) for him except with an excuse.) It was said to Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), "What is the excuse?" He said, "Fear or illness."

It is authentically reported that a blind man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying: ('O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to lead me to the Masjid. Am I permitted to offer Salah at home?' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, 'Do you hear the call to Salah (Adhan)?' He said, 'Yes.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Then, respond.') (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) There are many Hadiths that corroborate this meaning.

Q: When I entered the Masjid (mosque) to join the congregational Salah, I found the row was full and I was unable to stand to the right of the Imam. Therefore, I offered one Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) standing alone behind the row. A newcomer joined me during the second Rak`ah in the new row. After the Imam said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), I made up for the Rak`ah during which I was standing alone. Have I acted correctly?

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A: Anyone who offers Salah (Prayer) while standing alone behind the row of the congregation, their Salah is not valid, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).) If you offered one Rak`ah or more standing alone behind the row, your Salah is not valid and must be performed again. It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) (saw a man praying alone behind the row, so he ordered him to repeat the Salah) He (peace be upon him) said: (There is no Salah for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row.) Thus, you should wait until someone comes to form a new row with them, try to find a place in the row, or stand to the right of the Imam. It is not permissible to pray alone behind the row. May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the ruling on performing Salah (Prayer) alone behind a row? If a person enters the Masjid (mosque) and finds no space in the row to stand in; what should he do? If I find a child who has not reached puberty, may I form a new row with him?

A: The Salah performed by a person standing alone behind the row of the congregation is Batil (null and void), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).﴿ It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw a man praying alone behind the row. He (peace be upon him) ordered him to perform Salah again without asking him whether he found a space in the row of the congregation or not. This indicates that it does not matter whether the person finds a space in the row or not. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to block any means leading to take the matter of offering Salah behind the row alone lightly.

Yet, it will count as valid if a latecomer enters the Masjid while the Imam is making Ruku` (bowing), and makes Ruku` before reaching the row then stands in the row of the congregation before the Imam makes Sujud (prostration). It is narrated by Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) in his Sahih on the authority of Abu-Bakrah Al-Thaqafy (may Allah be pleased with him) that he entered the Masjid while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was making Ruku`. He made Ruku` before reaching the row and then stood in the row of the congregation. After saying Taslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: ﴾May Allah increase your zeal (for the good), but do not do this again.﴿ He (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for this Rak`ah. If, upon entering the Masjid, a Muslim finds no space in the row to stand in and is unable to stand on the right side of the Imam, he has to wait for another man or a child who is seven years old or more to form a new row with him. May Allah guide all Muslims to understand His Religion and adhere to it, for He is All-Hearer, Ever Near!

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother, A. A. A. Kh. May Allah grant you success! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Referring to your Fatwa request which is registered with the Departments of Scholarly Research under no. 1221 dated 23/4/1405 A.H., we inform you that we have reviewed it and the following are your questions and their answers:

Q: A man entered a Masjid (mosque) and found that Salah (Prayer) had already started. The rows were complete and there was no space in the rows; therefore, he offered Salah behind the rows of Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer) and did not pull back any of the persons praying. Is his Salah valid or not?

A: The Salah of this man is invalid according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).﴿ Moreover, it is reported that ﴾the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw a man praying alone behind the row, so he ordered him to repeat the Salah.﴿ (Related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Hibban who ranked it as Sahih (authentic) and its Isnad [chain of narrators] is good) May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

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Q: Respected Shaykh, I hope you could tell us about the ruling on a person who offers Salah (Prayer) individually behind the row in the congregational Salah. Will it be valid or it must be repeated as the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded the person whom he saw offering Salah behind the row to repeat it? Is this Hadith Sahih (authentic) or not; is it abrogated or does it contradict another Hadith in the same context? We would like you to elaborate on this issue, because many disputes took place recently in this regard. Is it permissible for those who come to the Masjid while the first row is complete and they fear to miss the Rak`ah to pull someone from the first row or should they pronounce Takbir and commence or wait? It is worth mentioning that if they wait, they will miss the Rak`ah. Could you kindly advise? May Allah bless you!

A: It is not permissible for a Muslim to offer Salah in a row alone behind the row of congregation, because of the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).) If they offer Salah individually, they have to repeat the Salah, because of this Hadith and the Hadith which you mentioned in the question which are both Sahih.

The Muslim is not allowed to pull anyone back from the row, because the Hadith mentioned in this regard is Da`if (weak).

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Rather, he has to seek a space in the row or stand beside the Imam if this is possible. If this is not possible, he may wait for another person to stand with him in the new row, even if he misses a Rak`ah. This is the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars in this regard, based on the above-mentioned Hadiths and others in the same context.

It is obligatory on people of knowledge regarding disputable matters to refer them to Allah and His Messenger and not to adhere to Taqlid (strictly following a specific School of Jurisprudence), because of Allah's Saying: (O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.) And His Saying: (And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge).) May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the ruling if a Muslim enters the Masjid (mosque) and finds no place in the row? Is it permissible for him to draw a person back from the front row?

A: If a person enters the Masjid and finds all the rows complete and fails to find a gap in one of the rows, he should wait for another one to come and both of them are to form a row to the right side of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). It is not permissible for him to draw anyone from the row.

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This is because the Hadith narrated in this regard is Da`if (weak). Besides, drawing a praying person from the row will create an empty space in the row, whereas the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered gaps to be filled. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A man joined congregational Salah (Prayer) while standing alone in a row and after offering one Rak`ah (unit of prayer) a man stood by his side. After the Imam said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), he stood and offered a fifth Rak`ah to compensate for the first invalid Rak`ah which he offered alone behind the row. Is his Salah valid? What should one do in this case?

A: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row (in congregational Salah).) Also: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw a man offering Salah while standing alone behind the row, so he ordered him to repeat the Salah.) If a person offers Ruku` (bowing) out of the row then enters the row before Sujud (prostration), the Rak`ah is counted as valid, according to the Hadith related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih: (Once Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafy (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Masjid while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was offering Ruku`.

So, Abu Bakrah joined them by bowing out of the row and after that he entered the row. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, 'May Allah increase your zeal (for the good), but do not do this again.') The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not command him to make up for the Rak`ah, which indicates that the Rak`ah is valid and this act is excluded from the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (There is no Salah (valid) for a person who offers it while standing alone behind the row.) Allah is the Grantor of success!

Salah in the entire Haram entails a double reward

Q: Does receiving a double reward for praying in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) apply to the entire Haram (Sanctuary of Makkah) or is it confined to the Masjid (mosque) itself?

A: Scholars have two opinions on this issue and the more correct of them is that doubling the reward applies to the entire area of Haram, based on the general Ayahs and Hadiths which indicate that all this area is called Al-Masjid Al-Haram, such as the Saying of Allah (Exalted be He): ﴾Verily, those who disbelieved and hinder (men) from the Path of Allâh, and from Al-Masjid-al-Harâm (at Makkah) which We have made (open) to (all) men, the dweller in it and the visitor from the country are equal there [as regards its sanctity and pilgrimage (Hajj and 'Umrah)] - and whoever inclines to evil actions therein or to do wrong (i.e. practise polytheism and leave Islâmic Monotheism), him We shall cause to taste from a painful torment.﴿ In this Ayah, Al-Masjid Al-Haram refers to the whole area of the sanctuary. There are other Ayahs carrying this meaning.

However, offering Salah (Prayer) in the Masjid around the Ka`bah has a great merit from many aspects: largeness of the number of praying people, closeness to the Ka`bah as well as scholarly consensus on doubling the reward of Salah offered there, rather than other Masjids on which there is a difference among scholars as we mentioned previously. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Does offering Salah in the areas surrounding Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) or Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) have the same merit and reward given to those who offer Salah inside the Two Holy Mosques? Please enlighten us, may Allah reward you with the best!

A: The places added to Al-Masjid Al-Haram and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy take the ruling of the place they are added to and the reward of Salah is doubled in them in the same way that it is doubled in the Masjid itself, as a Favor and Bounty from Allah. Allah is the One Who grants success!

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Manner of Salah for people having legal excuses

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Rulings of Taharah to be observed by a patient

We have received many questions regarding the ruling on the Taharah (ritual purification) and Salah (Prayer) of a patient. The following is a detailed reply:

A: All praise be to Allah Alone, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and Companions! Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has legislated Taharah for every Salah. Removal of ritual impurity from clothes, body, and the place of Salah are two of the conditions of Salah.

If a Muslim wants to offer Salah, they should perform the well-known Wudu' (ablution) to remove minor Hadath (ritual impurity that necessitates ablution) or perform Ghusl (full ritual bath) to remove major Hadath (ritual impurity that necessitates full bath). If a person answers the call of nature, they should perform Istinja' (cleansing the private parts with water after urination or defecation) or Istijmar (cleansing the private parts with a hard material after urination or defecation) before performing Wudu' so that the purification and cleansing will be complete. The following is an explanation of some of the rulings related to this issue:

1- Performing Istinja' with water is Wajib (obligatory) for cleansing of any discharge coming out through the front and back passage (urethra and anus), such as urine and feces.

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The one who sleeps or breaks wind need not perform Istinja'; they should perform Wudu' only, because Istinja' is legislated to remove impurities and in case of sleeping or breaking wind, there are no impurities to be removed.

Istijmar is a substitute for Istinja' and it is done using stones or any hard material. It is necessary to use three pure stones or more, for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who performs Istijmar, let him do it with an odd number of stones.﴿ And: ﴾When any of you goes to defecate, he should take with him three stones to cleanse himself with, for they will be sufficient for him.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud) The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade using less than three stones as related by Muslim.

It is not permissible to perform Istijmar with dung, bones, food and anything valued or considered

sacred. It is better to perform Istijmar with stones, toilet paper, adobe, and the like and then use water afterwards, for stones will remove the impurity itself

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while water will purify the area, which is more effective. It is optional for a person to perform either Istinja' with water or Istijmar with stones or the like or with them both. It is narrated on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): ﴾When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) entered the privy, I and another young boy like me used to carry a water skin, and a pointed staff, and he would cleanse himself with water.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) It is also narrated that `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said to a group of women: ﴾Tell your husbands to clean themselves (their private parts) with water, for I am too shy to tell them so. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to do that.﴿ (Ranked as Sahih [authentic Hadith] by Al-Tirmidhy)

If a person wants to use only one of them (i.e. water or stones), it is preferred to choose water, because it cleans the area, removes the impurity itself and its traces and is more thorough in cleansing. If a person chooses to use stones only, they should use three, if it cleanses the area; but if it is not enough, they should use four or five (or more) until the area is clean. However, it is better to use an odd number of stones, based upon the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾Anyone who performs Istijmar, let him do it with an odd number of stones.﴿ It is not permissible to perform Istijmar with the right hand, based upon the Hadith narrated by Salman: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade us from performing Istinja' with our right hand.﴿

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾None of you should hold his penis with his right hand while urinating, nor should he wipe himself with his right hand after answering the call of nature.﴿ However, if the left hand has been cut off, broken, or such like, it is permissible to perform Istijmar with the right hand and there is nothing wrong with that. Performing Istijmar together with Istinja' with water is better and more perfect.

The Islamic Shari`ah (Law) is based upon facility and providing ease; Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has, therefore, lightened the duties of worship on those who have a valid excuse, so they can worship Him easily, without inconvenience or hardship. He (Exalted be He) says: ﴾and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship﴿ And: ﴾Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴿ And: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When I command you to do something, do of it as much as you can.﴿ And: ﴾The religion (of Islam) is ease.﴿

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If a sick person is unable to purify themselves of minor impurity with water by making Wudu', or unable to perform Ghusl to remove major impurity, due to weakness, or fear of making their illness becoming worse, or delaying recovery, they may perform Tayammum (dry ablution with clean earth). This is done by striking one's hands on clean dust once, then wiping one's face with the palms of the hands and fingers, and then wiping the hands with the palms, for Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (by sexual relations) and you find no water, perform Tayammum with clean

earth and rub therewith your faces and hands (Tayammum).) Those who are unable to use water fall under the same ruling as those who are unable to find water, for Allah (Glorified be He) says: (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: (When I command you to do something, do of it as much as you can.)

A sick person may fall under one of the following circumstances regarding Taharah:

1- It is not permissible for a sick person to perform Tayammum, if the sickness is mild and there is no fear that using water may lead to death, severe sickness, delay of recovery, or increase of pain such as headaches, toothaches, and such like. If the sick person is able to use warm water and that will not harm them, then it is not permissible for them to perform Tayammum, because it is permitted in order to ward off harm, but they are not likely to be harmed and because they can find water, they are obliged to use it.

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2- If a person suffers from a sickness where there is a risk of death or loss of a limb, or the fear of further sickness that may lead to death or the loss of a limb, it is permissible for them to perform Tayammum. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allâh is Most Merciful to you.)

3- It is permissible for a sick person to perform Tayammum, if they are suffering from a sickness which makes them unable to move and there is no one to bring them water.

4- If a person who is suffering from a wound, sore, broken bone, or a disease in which the use of water will harm them, becomes Junub (in a state of major ritual impurity), it is permissible for them to perform Tayammum, based upon the evidence mentioned above. If they are able to wash the sound parts of their body then they must do that, and perform Tayammum for the rest.

5- If the sick person is in a place where there is no water or dust, and there is no one to bring either of them, they may offer Salah in the manner that suits their circumstance; they should not delay the Salah. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can)

6- A sick person who suffers from incurable urinary enuresis, continuous bleeding or breaking wind should perform Wudu' for every Salah after the beginning of its due time. They should wash any soiled parts of their body or clothes. They should assign a pure garment for Salah, if possible. Allah (Exalted be He) says:

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(and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship) And: (Allâh intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (When I command you to do something, do of it as much as you can.) They should prevent urine or blood from smearing their clothes, bodies, and the place in which they will pray. They can recite from the Mus-haf (Qur'an, the Book) and offer Salah as much as they would like till the due time of Salah is over, then they should repeat Wudu' or Tayammum, if they are unable to perform Wudu'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the women who experience Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period) to perform Wudu' for every Salah. Tayammum is invalidated by all that nullifies Wudu', the ability to use water, and its availability. May Allah grant us success!

How should the sick offer Salah?

Scholars are unanimous that whoever cannot offer Salah (Prayer) while standing may offer it while sitting. If someone cannot offer Salah even while sitting, they may offer it while lying on their side, preferably the right side, facing the Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced in Prayer). If someone cannot offer Salah on their side, they may offer it while lying on their back. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Imran Ibn Husayn: ﴾Pray while standing and if you cannot, pray while sitting and if you cannot do even that, then pray lying on your side.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari.) Al-Nasa'y provided the following addition: ﴾If you cannot do even that, you can pray lying on your back.﴿

If someone can stand but cannot bow or prostrate, neither action may be left out. In such a case, they should offer Salah while standing and make a gesture signaling Ruku` (bowing) and then sit and make a gesture signaling Sujud (prostration). Allah (Exalted be He) stated: ﴾And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayer)].﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in a similar case: "Offer Salah while standing." This is also based on the general principle inferred from the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) that reads: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ If they have a problem with their sight and a

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trustworthy doctor informs them that they can offer Salah only while lying on their back, they may offer Salah while lying on their back.

If someone cannot perform both Ruku` and Sujud, they should gesture signaling both of them giving Sujud a lower motion than that of Ruku`. If they cannot perform Sujud only, they should perform Ruku` and gesture signaling Sujud. In case someone cannot bend their back, they may bend only their neck. If someone's back is naturally bent and seem as if they perform Ruku`, they should bend their back a bit more and bring the head nearer as to the ground to perform Sujud. However, if someone cannot even gesture, intention and recitation are enough.

As long as the sick is conscious, Salah can never be dropped based on the above-quoted evidence. Once a patient, while still offering Salah, has the ability to do acts of Salah they could not do, such as standing, sitting, bowing, prostrating or gesturing, they should do them while completing the Salah. The sick, like any other person, who forgets a Salah or sleeps and misses it has to offer it once they get up or remember it. They may not delay the performance of Salah to a similar Salah on a subsequent day. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in this regard: ﴾Whoever forgets a Salah or sleeps and misses it, let him offer it when he remembers, and there is no other expiation for it but that. He then recited the Ayah: ﴾and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) for My Remembrance.﴿ ﴿

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Salah should by no means be abandoned. A Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) has to be punctual in performing Salah more so when sick than when healthy. One may not abandon Salah until its time expires even when ill, so long as they are conscious. Rather, they should offer Salah at its due time as much as possible. Thus, a sane person who abandons Salah intentionally, knowing the Shar`y (Islamic legal) ruling and having the ability to perform it even through gestures; is not ignorant and is judged by the majority of scholars to be a disbeliever. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾That which differentiates us from them (i.e. disbelievers and hypocrites) is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also stated: ﴾The peak of the matter is Islam; the pillar is Salah; and its topmost part is Jihad (Fighting/Struggling in the Cause of Allah).﴿

If someone cannot offer all Salahs at each Salah's respective due time, they may combine Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers and Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers at the time of the latter or the former whichever is possible. Thus, one may offer Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers at the time of

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the former or the latter. One may also combine Maghrib and `Isha' at the time of the former or the latter. However, Fajr (Dawn) Prayer may not be combined with any subsequent or previous Salah, because its time is largely separated from previous and subsequent Salahs. These are some cases related to a patient's Taharah (ritual purification) and Salah.

I ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) to heal all Muslim patients and forgive their sins and to grant us all forgiveness and health in this life and in the Hereafter, for He is All-Generous. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Q: Should a disabled person offering Salah (Prayer) while sitting in a chair make the positioning of hands and bending for Ruku` (bowing) different from those of Sujud (prostration)? Or, is there latitude in this regard? Inform us, may Allah reward you!

A: It is Wajib (obligatory) on a person who offers Salah while sitting on the ground or in a chair to make their Sujud lower than their Ruku`. It is a Sunnah (acts, sayings or approvals of the Prophet) to place their hands on their knees while performing Ruku`.

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As for Sujud, it is Wajib to put them on the ground, if possible. Otherwise, they may put them on their knees. To this effect, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have said: ﴾I have been ordered to perform Sujud on seven bones, i.e. on the forehead along with the tip of the nose - and the Prophet (peace be upon him) pointed towards his nose - both hands, both knees and the tips of toes.﴿

However, if someone cannot do that because of some disability and offers Salah while seated, there is nothing wrong in that. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When I command you to do anything, do of it as much as you possibly can.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Q: A brother from Misan asks: Some people, especially the elderly, cannot prostrate or sit for Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer). Therefore, they offer Salah (Prayer) while standing and sitting in a chair or on the wall between

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rows for Sujud (prostration). What is the ruling on doing so?

A: The practice described by the questioner is unarguably acceptable if this is the only possible alternative. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) stated: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ He (may He be Praised) also stated: ﴾Allâh burdens not a person beyond his scope.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Imran Ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with both of them): ﴾Pray while standing and if you cannot, pray while sitting and if you cannot, then pray lying on your side, and if you cannot even do that, then pray lying on your back.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih and Al-Nasa'y in his Sunan, and this is the wording of the latter). May Allah grant us success!

A woman who could not

observe Sawm or offer Salah while ill and then died

Q: The questioner who is from Iraq asks: My mother used to perform Salah (Prayer) and observe Sawm (Fast) regularly. However, she became severely ill for some time and then died two years ago. While ill, she did not observe Sawm or offer Salah, because she was unable to do so. Is it necessary for me to pay a Kaffarah (expiation), observe Sawm or Salah on her behalf? Inform me, may Allah bless you.

A: Since she died of illness that made her unable to observe Sawm for a long period, it is not necessary for you either to observe Sawm or feed poor persons on her behalf (all praise be to Allah). With regard to not performing Salah, she was mistaken. She should have done so, because illness is not an excuse for postponing Salah. The sick must offer Salah in accordance with their ability: while standing, while sitting,

while lying on either side, preferably the right side if possible, or even while lying on their back. These were the instructions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to one of his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) who complained of illness. He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Perform Salah while standing. If you cannot, perform it while sitting. If you cannot, perform it while lying on your side. If you cannot even do that, then perform it while lying on your back.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari and Al-Nasa'y; the wording is that of Al-Nasa'y)

This is what the sick must do. They should offer Salah while sitting if they cannot offer it while standing. It is permissible for them to sit kneeling down, cross-legged or in the way one sits between the two Sajdahs (prostrations) and perform Salah. If they cannot sit, they may offer Salah while lying on either side, preferably the right side. They should intend to perform the pillars and Wajibs (obligatory acts) of Salah and recite as much as they can of the required utterances. They should pronounce Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") and then recite Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) along with any other portion of the Qur'an. They should then pronounce Takbirat-ul-Intiqal (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" whenever moving from one posture to another during Prayer) with the intention of performing Ruku` (bowing) and then say: "Subhana Rabbiya Al-`Azhim (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great)," at least once, but preferably thrice or more. They should then say: "Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah (Allah listens to those who praise Him)," intending rising from Ruku`, and then say: "Our Lord, and to You be all Praise filling the heavens, [filling] the earth, whatever is between them, and filling whatever else You wish." They should then say: "Allahu Akbar" with the intention of performing Sujud and say: "Subhana Rabbiya Al-A`la (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High)" at least once but preferably thrice or more. Thereafter, they should say: "Allahu Akbar," to rise from Sujud intending to sit between the two Sajdahs and then say:

"My Lord, forgive me," at least once but preferably thrice or more. Then they should say: "Allahu Akbar," intending the second Sajdah and then say: "Subhana Rabbiya Al-A`la," in the manner described above.

It is Mustahab (desirable) to make much Du`a' (supplication) while in Sujud (prostration). They should do the same in subsequent Rak`ahs (units of Prayer); praying and invoking according to their ability. That said, I would like to tell you that you may not perform Salah on her behalf. Rather, you should supplicate Allah for her and ask mercy for her if she was a Muslim. If she believed in supplicating to the dead or seeking their help, or supplicating to other than Allah, no Du`a' should be made for her, for this would be major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship that takes the Muslim out of Islam). If while alive she used to supplicate to the dead, sacrifice for them or seek their help, this would be major Shirk.

Invoking, seeking the help of, sacrificing for, or offering vows to the dead such as saying "O Lord `Abdul-Qadir! Cure my sick relative, grant me victory, or give me health," are types of major Shirk. Moreover, whoever dies as such may not be supplicated for because they die as disbelievers (We seek Allah's forgiveness and safety). Moreover, if she was a monotheist who did not invoke the dead and worshipped Allah alone, it would be permissible to supplicate Allah and ask Him to forgive her. However, no Salah may be performed on her behalf as Salah is not made up for on behalf of the deceased.

Should a patient perform Salah before or after surgery?

Q: It is well-known that a patient remains anesthetized after surgery and remains in pain for hours after recovering consciousness. Should such a patient offer Salah (Prayer) before the surgery when Salah time is not due yet or delay the Salah until fully conscious even after one or more days? Give us your legal opinion, may Allah reward you!

A: It is obligatory on a doctor to consider the whole matter to see if it is possible to delay the surgery until the time of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer is due, for example, so that the patient may combine Zhuhr and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer at the time of the former. The same also applies to night time; a patient may combine Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers at sunset before the surgery is performed. However, it may happen that the surgery is performed at forenoon, in which case a patient is pardoned provided that it is necessary to have the surgery before Salah time is due. In such a case, a patient has to make up for the Salahs they missed while unconscious, even after one or two days once they regain consciousness. A patient, in such a case, will be liable to nothing, just as a sleeping person who has to make up for the Salahs they missed while sleeping in their right order once they get up.

The right order means offering Zhuhr Prayer before `Asr Prayer and so on until one make up for all missed Salahs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in this regard: ﴾Anyone who forgets a Salah, let them offer it as soon as they remember, for there is no Kaffarah (expiation) for it other than that.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Fainting due to illness or therapy comes under the same ruling as long sleeping in which the obligation of making up for missed Salah is waived if one remains unconscious for more than three days. In such a case, one will come under the same ruling as an insane person, who, after regaining sanity, should resume performing Salah. This is based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾The Pen is lifted (is stopped from recording the deeds) of three (persons): a sleeper until he awakes, a child until he attains puberty, and a lunatic until he regains reason.﴿ In the Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not stipulate making up for Salah as far as a child and a lunatic are concerned. Rather, it is authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) only ordered a person who was asleep or forgot, to make up for missed Salah. May Allah grant us success!

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Salah when undergoing

hemodialysis

Q: Your Eminence `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz (may Allah protect you) As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) I suffer from kidney failure and undergo hemodialysis three times a week. Sometimes, the Adhan (call) to Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer is pronounced while I am on the dialysis which may take four hours. I can neither move nor perform Wudu' (ablution) when I am in this state. Am I excused for delaying Salah until its prescribed time passes or should I offer Salah in this state without performing Wudu'? It is noteworthy that the chair in which I sit for the dialysis does not face the Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced for Prayer). Please tell me what I should do, may Allah reward you!

A: Walaikum asalam warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you too!)

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It is permissible in this situation to combine two Salahs (Prayers) at the time of the earlier or the later one. If the dialysis is done during the time of the earlier Salah, you may combine the Maghrib with `Isha' (Night) at the time of the earlier. If the process is done before the due time of Maghrib Prayer begins or at the beginning of its due time and combining the two Salahs at the time of the earlier is impossible, the Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) is to combine the Maghrib with `Isha' at the time of the later, because you are a patient and so fall under the ruling of the sick. Likewise, the traveler who is riding a means of transport is allowed to combine two Salahs at the time of the earlier when they depart their place. When they depart before the time of the earlier Salah begins, they are allowed to combine two Salahs at the time of the later, according to the manner reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). The same ruling applies to Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers in the case of the sick and the traveler. May Allah cure you and all sick people! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

Q: Dear respected Shaykh, `Abdul- `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz, the General Mufty of the Kingdom, may Allah protect you! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

One day, I was stricken with diarrhea and vomiting, may Allah preserve you from this, which caused me to go to hospital at 2 p.m. When the specialized doctor knew that I have chronic renal failure and that I receive hemodialysis three times a week, he said that I must take medication with hemodialysis. They started carrying out the hemodialysis at 1 p.m., and I thought that it would not take a long time for I had done it the previous day, but this process lasted until the Adhan (call) to Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer.

I want to know if I am sinful for delaying `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer until Maghrib Prayer? Taking into consideration that I cannot perform Wudu' (ablution) or Tayammum (dry ablution with clean earth) or even move as long as the medical equipment is attached to me and that the chair I sat on was not directed to Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced for Prayer) and I preferred not to offer Salah (Prayer) in this condition. Also, I asked them to remove the medical equipment to offer Tayammum, but the doctor told me that this is not possible for it requires sterilizing again and changing some equipment and medicines.

What should a Muslim do in this case, particularly that the patient undergoing hemodialysis remains conscious and cannot come under the same ruling as the sleeper, the child and the lunatic whose deeds are not recorded. Please answer me, may Allah reward you!

A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) You are required to perform Salah (Prayer) at its prescribed time according to your capability even by performing Tayammum if you are unable to use water. Also, there is nothing wrong if the person prays in a direction other than the Qiblah if this is not possible. If a Muslim still cannot perform Salah in spite of that, they will be permitted to delay performing it, because when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was occupied by fighting the Kafirs (disbelievers) during the Battle of Ahzab, he delayed offering `Asr Prayer until after Maghrib Prayer and he performed it before Maghrib.

This is also substantiated by Allah's Saying (Exalted be He): ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ May Allah cure you from every disease and grant you understanding of religion, for He is the All-Hearer, Ever-Near! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Rulings on combining and shortening Salahs

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A traveler leading a resident in Salah and vice versa

Q: A traveler wants to perform Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer in congregation. He found a resident person who performed Zhuhr Prayer. Is it permissible for a resident to perform Salah (Prayer) with a traveler? Should he shorten the Salah like the traveler or perform it in full?

A: When a resident performs Salah behind a traveler so as to attain the reward of congregational Salah (Prayer) even if the resident has already performed the obligatory Salah, he should perform two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) like the traveler because it will be counted as supererogatory for him. Yet, when a resident performs an obligatory Salah behind a traveler such as Zhuhr Prayer, `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer or `Isha' (Night) Prayer, then he should perform four Rak`ahs and thus, he is obliged to complete his Salah upon the traveler saying the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) upon completing his two Rak`ahs. When a traveler performs Salah behind a resident, where both of them are performing an obligatory Salah, the traveler is obliged to complete it as four Rak`ahs according to the most authentic of the scholars' two main views.

This is based on what was related by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad and Imam Muslim in his book of Sahih (may Allah be Merciful with them both) that Ibn `Abbas was asked about the traveler who performs Salah behind a resident Imam as four Rak`ahs and when he performs Salah with other travelers, he shortens it to be two Rak`ahs. He replied that this is the Sunnah.

This is also proven by the general meaning of the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (The Imam is appointed

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so that he should be followed, so do not be at variance with him.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Q: If a traveler goes in a visit to some persons who are considered to be residents in this place when it is time for an obligatory Salah (Prayer) and he is the most qualified to lead them in Salah, should he shorten the Salah?

A: The Sunnah is that he should lead them performing the Salah licensed for a traveler. Upon saying the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) on his part, they should stand up and complete the Salah on their own because the Prophet (peace be upon him) led the people of Makkah during the year of the the Liberation of Makkah performing the Salah licensed for a traveler and commanded them to complete their Salah. Yet, if the traveler completes the Salah with them, then this is permissible but he will have left something that is better.

It has been authentically reported that `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) used to perform Salah in full while leading people during Hajj during the last years of his caliphate. It has also been authentically reported that `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) used to perform Salah in full whenever she traveled and would comment that this was not hard for her. However, it is better to do what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did because he is the legislator and the teacher (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

Q: The questioner from Riyadh asks: "What is the ruling on the person who shortens his Salah (Prayer) being led by someone who performs it fully and vice versa? And how can

they do this?"

A: When a person who is entitled to shorten Salah leads another who should perform it in full, the resident should stand up and complete his Salah as four Rak`ahs when the Imam says the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) i.e. upon finishing the second Rak`ah. In other words, if the Imam (the one leading a congregational Prayer) is a traveler, then he should perform just two Rak`ahs and upon saying the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), those performing Salah behind him should stand up and complete their Salah as four Rak`ahs if they are residents. The travelers among them should say the Taslim the same as the Imam, provided that the Imam is traveling. However, if it is the Imam who is a resident and those performing Salah behind him are travelers, then they should complete the Salah with the Imam because it is not permissible for them to shorten the Salah in this case; rather, they should complete it as four Rak`ahs.

This is based on what was authentically reported in a sound Hadith that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) was asked about the one who performs Salah behind an Imam. People asked him: "O Ibn `Abbas, why do we perform the four-Rak`ah Salah as four Rak`ahs when we are behind the Imam and perform them as two Rak`ahs when we perform them in our tents?" He said: "This is the Sunnah." (Related by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (Hadith compilation) with a good chain of narration. Its origin is in Sahih Muslim.) This proves that when a traveler performs a four-Rak`ah Salah behind a resident Imam, then the first should complete them as four Rak`ahs based on the mentioned Hadith. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Mr. `A. B. B. from Tamir, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, asks: "A traveler intends to combine and shorten Salah (Prayer) but he offered Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer in congregation. Should he offer `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer shortened after Imam says Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) directly or

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is it allowable for him to delay it? Moreover, is there a certain time limit for this delay? Please, give us a Fatwa! May Allah reward you well!

A: If a traveler offers Salah behind a resident, he should offer Salah in complete form according to what is authentically reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that he stated that the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) rules that if travelers offer Salah behind a resident they should offer it in complete form. As for combination between Salahs, there is no harm on offering `Asr (afternoon) Prayer shortened directly after performing Zhuhr (noon) Prayer in its due time with the congregation. Moreover, if `Asr Prayer is delayed to its time, there is no blame. Rather, doing so will be better if one is still in his residence during that day. This complies with the act of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for he used to combine every two obligatory Salahs while traveling in the time of one of them when he set out on journey. If a traveler is having a rest, he should offer every Salah in its due time for this was what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did often. He (peace be upon him) did so in Mina during the Farewell Hajj for he was offering each Salah in its due time shortened and he did not combine them. May Allah help everyone to follow the Sunnah and adhere to it!

Q: What is the ruling on a resident offering Salah (Prayer) behind a traveler or vice versa? Moreover, is it allowable for a traveler to shorten Salah if he is the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) or should he offer his Salah behind an Imam?

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A: It is permissible for a traveler and a resident to offer Salah behind one another, but if the resident is the Imam and the traveler offers Salah behind him, it is obligatory upon the traveler in this case to offer the complete Salah following his Imam according to what is mentioned Musnad (Hadith compilation of) Imam Ahmad" and the Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that he was asked about the traveler offering Salah behind a resident: "Should he offer four Raka`ahs (units of Prayer)?" He replied: "This agrees with the Sunnah." However, if the resident offers Salah behind a traveler in a four-Raka`ah-Salah, he should complete his Salah after the Imam pronounces Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer).

Q: I was traveling and at one of the rest stops I was to offer the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer at its Masjid (mosque). People there were residents. Therefore, they were to offer four Rak`ahs (units of Prayer). When I entered the Masjid, the Imam was making the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer), so I joined him and when he concluded Salah and made Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), I did the same as I was a traveler. Is my Salah valid? If not, should I repeat the Salah? Give me Fatwa! May Allah reward you well!

A: You have to perform the Salah again as it is obligatory upon the traveler when performing Salah behind a resident to offer Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer as four Rak`ahs because this is what is mentioned in the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). May Allah grant us success!

The minimum distance and period of combining and shortening Salah

This letter is to His Eminence Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz, the Mufty (Islamic scholar qualified to issue legal opinions) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta'. May Allah protect him! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

My brothers and I own a farm on Al-Kharj- Harad Road. The farm is 65 km from Al-Kharj and 140 km from Riyadh. We live in Riyadh and we usually travel to control and follow up the work at the farm. I hope that you would advise us with the ruling on shortening and combining the Salah (Prayer) and also breaking the Sawm (Fast) in the daytime of Ramadan in the following situations:

1- When we travel to spend a day or part of a day to follow up work

at the farm.

2- When we go to spend the weekend at the farm for rest and to follow up work.

3- When we travel to spend the mid-year vacation which is probably two weeks at the farm.

Is it permissible for us to break our Sawm in the daytime of Ramadan although there is no hardship and our houses are furnished with all conveniences at the farm?

5- Do our relatives and friends who accompany us to the farm have the same rulings as us?

Please send us your reply in writing! May Allah guide you to what pleases Him, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Respondent!

M. `A. S. from **Riyadh**

A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh! It is permissible for you and those who accompany you to the farm to shorten and combine Salah as well as break the Sawm during the daytime of Ramadan, if the case is as you have mentioned. However, if you spend more than

four days at the farm, it is not permissible for you all to shorten or combine Salah, or break the Sawm in the daytime of Ramadan. May Allah grant us success! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

Q: Could you please explain the question of shortening Salah (Prayer) while traveling? Is it authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) completed Salah in travel? Is there a definite distance and period over which it is permissible to shorten Salah? Please, support your answers to these questions with evidence from Qur'an and Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet)! May Allah reward you well!

A: When travelling, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and the `Isha' (Night) Prayer as two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) until he came back home. This is the repeated action of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was reported that he (peace be upon him) would sometimes, while traveling, shorten Salah and sometimes complete it, but this was not frequently done. This is because Sahih (authentic) Hadiths indicate that he would always shorten Salah in travel until he returned home. As for the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, he would offer it as it is; three Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) whether he was a traveler or resident. Similarly, He (peace be upon him) offered Fajr (Dawn) Prayer as two Rak`ahs as well as its two-Rak`ah Sunnah (supererogatory) Salah whether he was a traveler or resident. With regard to the Sunnah Salah of the Zhuhr, `Asr, Maghrib and `Isha', he (peace be upon him) did not use to perform them while traveling.

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A Mu'min (believer) should do what the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do in travel. Travel, according to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), is what takes a day and night in distance. It is estimated as eighty kilometers for whoever travels by car, plane or ship. This distance is called travel and is known to be travel according to the `Urf (custom) of Muslims. When a person travels this distance or more by camel, car, plane, ship or on foot, he is considered a traveler. Some scholars were of the view that the distance is to be determined according to `Urf, not kilometers. What is considered to be a travel according to `Urf is called a travel and hence Salah is to be shortened, and vice versa. The correct view is the one held by the Jumhur, i.e., determining the distance in kilometers. This is what should be abided by as it was reported from the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) who are the most knowledgeable people of the religion of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

Q: A questioner from Bombay, India, asks: Your Eminence, General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, may Allah guard and protect him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

May Allah, the Most High, the All-Powerful keep you in good health!

I want to know the ruling of the Shari`ah (Islamic law) on the following question. I am a train ticket inspector. Sometimes, I travel about two-hundred kilometers and sometimes four hundred and fifty kilometers by train, is it permissible for me to shorten the four-Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) Salah (Prayer)? Appreciate your guidance, may Allah bless you and accept your efforts in serving Islam and Muslims! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

A: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

Based upon what you mentioned, it is permissible for you to shorten Salah while travelling. After studying the issue, we have decided that the distance over which it is permissible to shorten Salah is approximately eighty kilometers or more.

May Allah guide all. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah Ibn Baz

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz to the honorable brother, judge of the Court of Khaybar, may Allah guide him to all good!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) Dear brother, I have received your letter, dated 3 Rabi` Thany, 1389 A.H. about the permissibility of shortening and combining Salah (Prayer) for a person whose work requires his frequent travel abroad from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or within the cities of the kingdom where it is permissible for the traveler to shorten and combine Salah, such as drivers or sales representatives.

A: The ruling on travelers apply to the categories mentioned in the question; they are permitted to shorten and combine Salah, like travelers according to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), based upon the generality of the Shari`ah (Islamic law) evidence. I know of no evidence that contradicts this. With regard to the scholars' view that a packer who lives with his family and does not intend to stay in a certain country is not allowed to benefit from the Rukhsahs (concessions) of traveling, this is a weak view that is not supported by any Shari`ah evidence. This was confirmed by Abu Muhammad Ibn Qudamah (may Allah be merciful with him) in his (encyclopedic book of Fiqh) Al-Mughny.

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Q: What is Your Eminence's view concerning the travel that permits one to shorten Salah, is it restricted to a certain distance? What is your opinion concerning the one who intends to stay in a place for more than four days, is he granted the Rukhsah (concession) to shorten Salah?

A: According to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), the distance that allows someone to shorten and combine Salah (Prayer) is defined by the distance of a day and a night's travel by camel or on foot at a regular pace, which is approximately 80 kilometers, because this distance is regarded as traveling according to `Urf (custom), unlike shorter distances. According to the Jumhur, whoever intends to stay for more than four days has to offer Salah in full, and observe Sawm (Fast) if it is Ramadan.

If the period of stay is less than that, he may shorten and combine Salah, and break his Sawm, because the basic principle is that a resident has to offer Salah in full, and is permitted to shorten Salah only when he is in travel. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stayed in the Farewell Hajj for four days during which he shortened Salah, then he went to Mina and `Arafat. This gives evidence of the permissibility of shortening Salah for whoever intends to stay four days or less. As for the report that the Prophet (peace be upon him) shortened Salah when he stayed for nineteen days in the year of the Liberation of Makkah and for twenty days in Tabuk, this was because he did not form the intention to stay;

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rather, he stayed for a purpose which he did not know when it would be accomplished. This is the interpretation of the Jumhur for the Prophet's stay in Makkah in the year of the Conquest of Makkah and in the year of battle of Tabuk, in order to be on the safe side and to act upon the original ruling which is the obligation on the residents to offer Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and `Isha' (Night) Prayer in four Rak`ahs (unit of Prayer).

However, if someone does not have the intention to stay and does not know when they will leave, they are permitted to shorten and combine Salah and break their fast during Ramadan when traveling, until they resolve to stay more than four or come back home. May Allah grant us success!

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From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz to the honorable brother A. F. F., may Allah grant him success! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Referring to your message, dated 10/11/1410 A.H., which includes, "I want to bring to Your Eminence's attention a subject which I asked you about a long time ago. It is concerned with combining and shortening Salah (Prayer) in traveling regardless of the duration of staying. There are many views on this issue. Therefore, I hope Your Eminence will illustrate two things:

First, with regard to traveling outside the Kingdom, is it permissible for me to combine and shorten Salah while on a journey, which may take more than two months? Note here that I cannot offer Salah while dressed in non-Arabic style clothes and I have to return to my apartment in order to offer Salah. Combining and shortening Salah puts me at ease. Is it permissible for me to combine and shorten Salah or not?

Second, many times I travel to Jaddah where I have a house but I live in Riyadh and I may stay there more than one month. So, is it permissible for me to shorten and combine Salah?

A: A: I inform you that the traveling which entails concession

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is what is considered as such by the way of custom and its distance is approximately eighty kilometers. Therefore, whoever is to pass this distance or more is entitled to enjoy these concessions of traveling: (i) wiping over the Khuffs (leather socks) for three days, (ii) shortening the Four-Raka`ah Prayer, (iii) combining both Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers in the time of one of them and similarly Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers, and (iv) breaking Sawm (Fast) during the month of Ramadan. However, if the person reaches the place he aims at and intends to stay more than four days, he is not entitled to enjoy these concessions. If he intends to stay less than four days, he is permitted to make use of these concessions.

As for the person who traveled to a country to do something and does not know when he will finish his affairs and does not specify a certain time for staying for more than four days, he can make use of the concessions of traveling even if his stay exceeds four days.

With regard to wearing non-Arabic clothes, it is not a valid excuse for delaying Salah after its due time nor is it an excuse for combining two Prayers. Moreover, the traveler should not avoid congregational prayer owing to traveling if it is possible for him. This is because offering Salah in congregation is obligatory whereas combining and shortening Prayer is a concession. May Allah guide all to what pleases Him and may He help you and us to do what is good. May Allah's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be with you.

The General Chairman of Administrations of Scholarly

Research, Ifta', Da`wah and Guidance

Q: Is it correct that a traveler has the right to shorten Salah (Prayer) regardless of the duration of traveling, even if it takes years? Is there a fixed duration after which the right to shortening Salah becomes waived? What is the ruling on whoever travels abroad for the purpose of studying or work: are they allowed to shorten their Salah until they come back from their study or business journey?

A: It is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) for a traveler to shorten the Salah (Prayer) to pattern after the Prophet (peace be upon him) and act in accordance with his Sunnah (whatever reported from the Prophet), so long as the distance reaches eighty kilometers or more. For example, if someone travels from Saudi Arabia to America they are allowed to shorten the Salah as long as they are still on the way. Similarly, if they travel from Makkah to Egypt or from Egypt to Makkah the same applies if they reside in a country; they are allowed to shorten the Salah in this country so long as their residence will be four days or less as observed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he settled down in Makkah during the Farewell Hajj, as he resided in Makkah the morning of 4th Dhul-Hijjah, and he kept on shortening until he went to Mina on 8th Dhul-Hijjah. This is also applicable if someone intends to reside for an indefinite period, whether it is four days or more. As then, they are allowed to shorten the Salah until they fulfill their need, or until they decide to reside for a period that exceeds four days according to the most correct opinion of scholars.

When someone unknowingly resides for an indefinite period of time to grant a grace period to another who is indebted to them for example, or to settle a dispute with someone, they are allowed to shorten the Salah so long as they are residing for an unspecified period of time, since they do not know exactly when their residence will end. Therefore, the ruling of a traveler applies to them and they can shorten Salah and break Sawm (Fast) in Ramadan, even if this lasts for years.

On the other hand, if someone resides or intends to do so for a long time for the sake of studying or for any other reason, they should complete their Salah, as this is the right opinion according to Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars) including the Four Imams (Abu Hanifah, Malik, Al-Shafi`y and Ahmad) and others. The basic principle for a resident is to complete Salah if he is staying either to study or for any other purpose.

However, Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) declared that it is permissible for a traveler to shorten the Salah if the period of residence is nineteen days or less. However, if someone intends to stay more than that period, they should complete the Salah according to the act of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who resided on the day of the Opening of Makkah for nineteen days during which he shortened the Salah. It is meant here that the residence period during which it is

permissible for a person to shorten the Salah starts from four days or less. This is the opinion of the majority; the safer thing with respect to one's religion, and it also drives danger away from this great `Ibadah (worship) which is considered the main pillar of Islam.

Replying to what Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) used as evidence; it was not authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) intended to reside for this period.

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Rather, he did that to establish the rules of Islam in Makkah and to remove the traces of Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah) without specifying a fixed period of time. As previously mentioned, a traveler is allowed to shorten the Salah if he does not intend to reside for a specified period even if that lasts for a long time. Therefore, my advice to my fellow Muslims who are traveling to study or for any other reason is to complete their Salah and fast Ramadan unless their residence will not exceed four days or if the residence period is not fixed and you do not know when you will finish your mission. In this case, you can apply the rulings on a traveler. This is the best of what was reported in this regard, and it is also the opinion of most of the scholars. Furthermore, you should be on the safe side regarding your Din (religion of Islam). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt﴿ and: ﴾Anyone who avoids doubtful matters, will have guarded their religion and honor﴿ .

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) stay in Makkah for nineteen days starting from the day of the Opening (of Makkah) is interpreted as that he did not intend to do this, but he did that to set right the affairs of the Din,

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establish Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/ monotheism) in Makkah and direct the Muslims to what they should do as previously mentioned. Therefore, this does not necessarily entail that he intended to reside, rather probably, he might have done that without prior intention, but the days passed while he was looking into the affairs of Muslims, setting right their affairs, and setting up the rituals of the Din in Makkah Al-Mukarramah. Over and above, there is no evidence of the Prophet's intention (peace be upon him) to reside for nineteen days, thus we cannot take it as a proof on setting the nineteen days as a duration within which shortening becomes permissible as reported from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them).

The same also can be applied to the Prophet's residence in Tabuk for twenty days, for there is no evidence proving his intention to reside. Rather, most probably, he resided there to seek information about the war, without being certain about the duration of his residence. The basic principle is that residence cannot be proven except with evidence, and he (peace be upon him) was traveling to launch Jihad (fighting/striving in the Cause of Allah) and fight against the Byzantines. Thus, he stayed in Tabuk during this period to study the issue of Jihad, and to see whether or not he would continue on his way to the Byzantines or return back. But Allah (Glorified be He) chose for him to return to Al-Madinah and so he did.

In conclusion, there is no evidence that the Prophet (peace be upon him) intended to stay for nineteen days in Makkah or that he definitely intended to stay in Tabuk for twenty days. Therefore it can be said that this is the least period during which shortening the Salah becomes permissible, or that this is the maximum period allowed for residence, rather this is a probability as declared by the Jumhur.

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The definition of the residence period by four days or less and the completion of the Salah when the period exceeds this duration is inferred from the residence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Makkah during the Farewell Hajj, since he (peace be upon him) resided there for four days definitely intending to perform Hajj from the fourth day till he went out to Mina. A group of scholars said that the residence is to be defined by ten days since he (peace be upon him) resided for ten days in Makkah during the Farewell Hajj. They included his residence in Mina and `Arafah counting it as an intended residence. Accordingly, the duration during which shortening Salah is permissible becomes ten days or less. This opinion is a strong and reasonable, but the Jumhur said that his heading from Makkah to Mina was the beginning of his travel, because he headed toward Mina to perform the rituals of Hajj then to go back to Madinah.

In any case, the scholars' views varied in this issue. However, the best and the safer (to the religion) of these views was that of the Jumhur, who said that if a traveler intends to stay in a country or in any place more than four days, they should complete their Salah, and if they intend to reside for a shorter period, it is permissible for them to shorten the Salah. Also if someone have no definite intention regarding when exactly will they travel, due to the need to fulfill something that may take sometime, they shall apply the rulings of travel no matter how long they will stay. Allah grants success.

I work in the marine forces along with some sailors, where we sail for three or four days. Is it permissible for us to shorten and combine Salah (Prayer) in this case? It is worth mentioning that we put to sea for short distances away from the city to finish some work. Please provide us with an answer.

A: Anyone who boards a ship or any other kinds of marine vessel has the same ruling as those who travel by car or train; if the distance covered is one at which shortening Salah is permissible. Such a person is allowed to shorten and combine the Salah, otherwise he is not. So, if the ship sails near by a harbor or shore for a distance of ten or twenty kilometers and so on, it is not permissible for them to shorten the Salah and they cannot apply the rulings of travel. However, if the ship sails to remote distances amounting to seventy, eighty or a hundred kilometers or more, this is considered traveling. In this case, those who are aboard the ship are allowed to shorten and combine every two Salah since they are travelers. This is the same as the person who goes on picnic at a distance of seventy kilometers or more.

Q: If we travel by land, is it permissible for us to shorten and combine the four-Rak`ah Salah (Prayer)?

A: If the place you are heading to by land is far from where you reside, such that it is considered traveling, it is permissible to shorten the Salah if the distance is about 80 kilometers or more. Shortening Salah in this case is better than completing it. This occurs by offering Zhuhr (Noon), `Asr (Afternoon) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers as two Rak`ahs (units of Prayers) for each. Also, you can combine Zhuhr and `Asr prayers together and Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' prayers together. However, if the traveler intends to stay in the place of destination, it is better not to combine prayers, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to shorten Salah without combining them when he was staying in Mina during the Farewell Hajj. But, he combined them in `Arafah and Muzdalifah due to necessity.

When a traveler intends to reside in a place for more than four days, he should not shorten, rather offer the four-Rak`ah Salah in full as is. This is the opinion of the majority of scholars. On the other hand, if the residence period is four days or less, it is better to shorten the Salah. May Allah grant us success.

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The desirability of combining two Salahs at the time of the earlier or the later one

Q: Regarding shortening and combining the Zhuhr (noon) and `Asr (afternoon) Prayers, which is preferable; to offer the Salah (Prayer) right after the Adhan (call to Prayer) or delay it to the mid-time of both Salahs?

A: If a traveler seeks to depart from the place of their residence ante merediem, they are allowed to offer the Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers combined at the time of the later one. The same applies to Maghrib (sunset) and `Isha' (night) Prayer, for if a person departs before Maghrib Prayer, they should combine Maghrib with `Isha' Prayer at the time of the later one. On the other hand, if they depart after Maghrib, they should combine both Salahs at the time of the earlier one. This is the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) regarding what we have mentioned. But if the person is residing, they have the choice; to combine the Salah either at the time of the later Salah or the earlier one. However, it is better to offer every Salah on its prescribed time as observed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Mina during the Farewell Hajj, for he used to offer each Salah on time as he was residing. But, if there is a need to combine the Salah, there is nothing wrong in this,

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since he (peace be upon him) combined the Salah in the battle of Tabuk and he was also residing. The same applies to a sick person, for they are allowed to combine the Salah according to what is easier for them. This means that he can offer Salah either at the time of the earlier or the later one. But in case there is no reason, as hardship, to combine the two Salahs, a person should offer the Salah on time, and this is the best to be done. And if they combine them, it will also be acceptable.

Q: When one can combine two Salahs (Prayers) and what is the time for Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units)?

A: A person may perform the combined Salah at the very beginning or end of the due time. The matter is flexible. The purified Shari`ah (Islamic law) allows offering the second at the time of the first or delaying the first to the time of the second or offering it in-between the times. Due to lawful excuses (i.e. the sickness and travel), the two combined Salahs can be performed at the same time. It is permissible, when necessary, to talk during the interval between the two combined Salahs. The time for Witr Prayer starts after the performance of `Isha' (Night) Salah, even if it is combined with and offered at the time of Maghrib (sunset) Salah and continues until time for Al-Fajr-ul-Sadiq (true dawn) begins.

May Allah grant us and you comprehension in religion and keep us adhere to it until we meet Him for He is the Most Generous! May Allah grant us success!

Q: A brother from Al-Ta'if asks: "We were traveling as a group and upon our arrival at the appointed place about an hour after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, I asked them to hasten to perform Wudu' (ablution) to shorten and combine both Maghrib

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and `Isha' (Night) Prayer. However, one of them said that Salah (Prayer) is not permissible at that time and that we should postpone it till the Adhan (call to Prayer) for `Isha' Prayer is announced. I told him that it is permissible to perform Salah during either of the two times of Maghrib or `Isha' Prayer and that once the time of Maghrib Prayer is finished, that of `Isha' Prayer starts immediately. He said that there is a time between the two times during which Salah is not permissible.

Your Eminence Shaykh, could you please explain the ruling of Shari`ah (Islamic law) regarding this issue? What is the desired time for combining the Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers? May Allah reward you well!

A: What you have mentioned is correct because there is no time between Maghrib and `Isha' Prayer during which it is impermissible to perform Salah. There is also no time between Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer during which it is impermissible to perform Salah. Rather, once the time appointed for the first has finished, that of the second starts immediately without separation. A traveler has the right to combine the two Salahs during the time of either of them because he has the same ruling as a patient for whom the two times have become one. Yet, it is better for a traveler, if he has already started the journey and left his home before the due time of the first Salah, to postpone it till the due time of the second in order for him to combine them in the time of the latter. If he leaves his home after the due time of the first Salah, then it is permissible for him to combine them at the earlier time following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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As for the traveler who has settled, it is better for him not to combine Salahs; rather, he should perform each Salah at its appointed time. He has the right to shorten Salahs without combining them if his rest will not be extended to more than four days. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) stayed in Mina during the Farewell Hajj for three days i.e. the day of `Eid and the eleventh and the twelfth days of the Days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) while shortening and performing each Salah at its due time without combining two Salahs. Yet, if a traveler intends to stay more than four days, then in order for him to be on the safe side in this case, he should perform every Salah at its due time without shortening it according to the majority of scholars. May Allah grant us all success!

Q: If during our travel, we passed by a Masjid (mosque) at the time of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, is it desirable for us to perform Zhuhr Prayer in congregation and then shorten `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, or should we perform Salah (Prayer) by ourselves? If we perform Salah in congregation and then want to shorten `Asr Prayer, should we stand up immediately after saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) to achieve close sequence? Or should we wait to remember Allah, glorify Him, and to say Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]") and then perform the 'Asr Prayer?

A: It is better for you to shorten Salah by yourselves because it is an act of the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) for the traveler to shorten the four-Rak'ah Salah. However, if you pray in congregation with residents, then you have to complete the Salah as four Rak`ahs (units of Prayer). This is according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

If you want to combine Salahs, then it is ordained for you to hasten to do that according to the Sunnah, as mentioned above in the answer of the previous question. You should do so immediately after saying Astaghfiru Allah (I seek the Forgiveness of Allah) three times and saying, "Allahumma anta As-Salam wa minka As-Salam, tabarakta ya dhal-Jalali wal-Ikram (Oh Allah! You are As-Salam (the source of peace) and from You is all peace. Blessed are You, the Possessor of Glory and Honor). Yet if there is just one traveler, then it is obligatory for him to perform Salah in full with the congregation of residents because performing Salah in congregation is obligatory, whereas shortening it is desirable. Thus, it is obligatory to give priority to what is obligatory over what is desirable. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A questioner from Al-Bahah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia says: "If a person arrives at the airport of Riyadh after `Isha' (Night) Prayer and has not performed Al-Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and `Isha' Prayers, should he combine and shorten them?"

A: Shortening Salah (Prayer) is allowed for a traveler as long as he is traveling. As for combining Salah, it needs some detailed discussion: While travelling, it is better to combine each two Salahs and perform them either at the time of the earlier or the latter according to one's circumstances as this is what was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him). During his travels, he (peace be upon him) used to combine both Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers together and Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers together. When he left his home before noon, he used to combine Zhuhr Prayer along with 'Asr Prayer in the time of the later. Moreover, when he left afternoon,

he used to combine Zhuhr Prayer along with 'Asr Prayer in the time of the first. The same applies to Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers; when he (peace be upon him) left before sunset, he used to delay Maghrib Prayer and combine it with `Isha' Prayer at the time of the latter. When he left after sunset, he used to combine Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers at the time of the first. Yet, if the traveler intends to settle down, then it is better for him not to combine the Salahs because during the Farewell Hajj, he (peace be upon him) did not combine two Salahs during his stay in Mina.

As for such a person who arrived at the airport of Riyadh without performing Maghrib or `Isha' Prayers, then it is permissible for him to combine Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers and to shorten `Isha' Prayer because the airport lies outside the city at the present time. There is no harm in delaying `Isha' and performing it in congregation in full at his town. May Allah grant us success!

Q: If a person wants to travel after Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and before `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, can he combine the Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers in the time of the first?

A: It is not permissible for him to combine two Salahs (Prayers) until he leaves the inhabited village or town completely and walks into the desert because the Messenger (peace be upon him) performed Zhuhr Prayer, at the Farewell Hajj in Medina as four Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) and then set out and performed `Asr Prayer in Dhu Al-Hulayfah as two Rak`ahs. May Allah grant us success!

When a person travels by himself, he is to offer Salah behind the Imam in full?

Q: If I am traveling and I stay at a destination for some days (three or four, more or less) and I enter the Masjid (mosque) to perform Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer at its due time in congregation in full i.e. four Rak`ahs (units of Prayer), then I stand up to shorten `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer by myself. Is it permissible to do so? Can I combine and shorten Salah (Prayer) alone at home as a traveler despite hearing the Adhan (call to Prayer) from nearby Masjids?

A: When a traveler firmly intends to stay in a country for more than four days, he should complete the Salah according to the viewpoint of the majority of scholars. If his stay is less than that, it is better to shorten the Salah and there is no blame on him if he performs Salah in full. Yet, if he is traveling alone, it is impermissible for him to shorten Salah by himself. Rather, he should perform Salah in congregation in full based on the Hadiths proving the obligation of performing Salah in congregation. This is evidenced also by what was authentically attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Musnad (Hadith compilation of) Imam Ahmad and Sahih Muslim on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that it is an act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) for the traveler

when he performs Salah with a resident Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to offer four Rak'ahs. This is also based on the general meaning of the saying of the Prophet (Peace be upon him): ﴾The Imam is appointed so that he should be followed, so do not be at variance with him.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Q: Is it permissible for the traveler performing `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) to combine and shorten Zuhr (Noon) Prayer along with 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer as long as his stay in Makkah extends for two or three days though he is near the Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah)? May Allah reward you well!

A: It is not permissible for a person who is traveling by himself to shorten Salah (Prayer); rather, he should perform Salah in full in congregation based on the fact that shortening Salah is desirable, whereas performing it in congregation is obligatory. Yet, if they are a group, then there is no harm in shortening Salah on condition that their stay extends for four days or less.

Is it better for a traveler to shorten Salah (Prayer) without combining (two Salahs) or to shorten and combine Salah and is there a correlation between them?

Q: Some people think that combining and shortening Salah are correlated; there is no combining without shortening and there is no shortening without combining; could you kindly elaborate on this? Is it better for a traveler to shorten Salah without combining or to combine along with shortening?

A: It is permissible for those for whom Allah legislated shortening of Salah (i.e. the traveler) to combine it but there is no correlation between them, so a person may shorten and combine. If the traveler will stay a period of time in the place to which he is heading, it is better for him not to combine as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did in Mina as well as during the Farewell Hajj where he shortened but did not combine. In the Battle of Tabuk, he did both; shortening and combining, and this indicates that the matter is flexible. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to shorten and combine if he was riding a mount. As for combining, it is more flexible. It is permissible for the sick as well as other Muslims to perform it in their Masjids (mosques)

if there is heavy rain especially between Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and `Isha' (Night) Prayer or between Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer. It is not permissible for them to shorten Salah because shortening is limited only to travel. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on combining and shortening Salah for the person who travels after the due time of Salah

Q: If the time of Salah (Prayer) is due while a man is still in town then he travels before performing Salah, is it permissible for him to shorten and combine Salah? Is it permissible for him to shorten and combine Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Salahs even though he knows that he will reach his destination in the time of `Asr Prayer?

A: According to the soundest of the two opinions of scholars and the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), if the time of Salah is due while a traveler is still in town, it is permissible for him to shorten the Salah when he leaves the boundaries of his town. If the traveler shortens and combines both Salahs and reach his destination before or after the time of the second Salah, he should not repeat it,

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because he offered it properly. However, if he offers it again, it will be considered as Nafilah (supererogatory).

Ruling on combining Salah when it rains

Q: What is your opinion, Your Eminence, on combining the Maghrib (Sunset) and the `Isha' (Night) Prayers when it rains nowadays in the cities where the roads are paved and lit, and there is no mud or obstacles on the road to the Masjid (mosque)?

A: There is no harm in combining the Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers, or the Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers according to the most authentic opinion of scholars, because of rain that makes it hard reach the Masjid. The same applies to mud and flooding in the marketplaces, as it represents a hardship. This is based on what was authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) ﴾that the Prophet (peace be upon him) combined the Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers, and the Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers in Madinah. ﴿

It was added by

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Muslim in his narration, ﴾without there being fear, rainfall, or travel.﴿

This indicates that the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) definitely knew that fear and rain were excuses for combining Salah, just like travel. However, it is impermissible to shorten Salah in this case; you can only combine Salah, because you are residents, not travelers; whereas shortening Salah is a Rukhsah (concession) for travelers only. May Allah grant us success!

Q: What is the criterion for combining two Salahs during heavy rain?

A: It is permissible to combine two Salahs, i.e. Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer with `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer with `Isha' (Night) Salah, for a lawful excuse, such as sickness, travel and heavy rain. According to the preponderant view, there is no harm if the person combines Zhuhr Prayer with `Asr Prayer as they do with Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers. Yet, some scholars say it is impermissible to combine Zhuhr Prayer with `Asr Prayer for the excuse of rain or mud with which hardship is associated.

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The correct view is that if the heavy rain or mud represents an obstacle, a Muslim is allowed to combine Zhuhr with `Asr Prayers as he would do with Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers. There is no harm to combine Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers at the time of the earlier, whether it is at the beginning or middle of its time. For example, while the person is offering Salah in the Masjid (mosque), it rains so heavily that he is unable to walk in the streets, so he is allowed to combine the two Salahs. He is also excused if he does not combine and offer each Salah in his home, because of the heavy rain and mud.

Q: Some Imams (leaders in congregational prayer) in some mosques combined the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer with the `Isha' (Night) Prayer, because of the fall of light rain that did not cause hardship. What is Your Eminence view with regard to this? Is the Salah of those people valid or should they offer it again?

A: It is not permissible to combine two Salahs except with a legal excuse, such as traveling, sickness and rain which wets clothes and causes some hardship such as accumulation of mud. Therefore, combining Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers or Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers without a legal excuse is not permissible and if a person does so, he should repeat the Salah he offered before its due time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Whoever does an act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, it is to be rejected.﴿ (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih)

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The origin of the Hadith is mentioned in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) in the Hadith narrated by `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴾Whoever introduces to our affair (of religion) anything which does not belong to it, (what be brings about) will have it rejected.﴿

In the light of these narrations, the person should know that it is obligatory on every Muslim to observe in his acts of worship all that comply with the purified Shari`ah (Islamic Law) and to keep away from anything that contradicts it. May Allah guide all Muslims to understand His religion and adhere firmly to it.

Is the intention a requisite condition for combining Prayers?

Q: Is the intention a requisite condition for combining Prayers? People often offer Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer without any intention of combining it with `Isha' (Night) Prayer. After they finish Maghrib Prayer, they discuss the issue of combining whereupon they start to offer `Isha' Prayer.

A: Scholars held different views regarding this issue. However, the most correct view is that the intention is not a condition when starting the first Salah (Prayer), rather it is permissible to combine two Prayers after finishing the first, if the condition (for combining the Prayers) exists, such as fear, rain or sickness.

Offering the two combined Salahs in sequence

Q: Is it obligatory to offer the two combined Salahs (Prayers) in close sequence? Some people delay it for a while which may be considered to be an interruption between the two Salahs when they combine two Salahs. What is the ruling on that?

A: When combining two Salahs at the time of the earlier one. It is obligatory to offer them in close sequence. It is permissible to have what can be regarded as a short break between them, as it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that. He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Pray as you have seen me praying.﴿ The correct view is that the intention here is not a condition as explained in the answer of the previous question. With regard to combining two Salahs at the time of the later one, it is more flexible, because the second Salah is performed at its due time. However, it is better to pray them one after the other, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on a traveler combining Salah at the end of the day

Q: Is it permissible for a Muslim who is on a long journey to combine Salah (Prayer) and offer them at the end of the day?

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A: This is a grave evil, which was not suggested by any scholar. Rather, it is permissible for a traveler to combine the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer at the time of either of them, before sunset, and to combine the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and the `Isha' (Night) Prayer at the time of either of them, before midnight. With regard to the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, it is not to be combined with any other Salah, rather it should always be offered on time, whether one is traveling or not, before the sun rises. May Allah grant us success!

Shortening and combining Salah

by a traveler within the city

Q: We are three people who traveled from Riyadh to Al-Qasim to spend Thursday and Friday there. Is it permissible for us to shorten and combine Salah (Prayer)? Is it obligatory upon us to offer the congregational Salah at the Masjid (mosque)?

A: It is permissible for you to shorten the four-Rak`ah Salahs (Prayer consisting of four units). With regard to the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, they are not to be shortened. Besides, you are not obliged to offer Salah with the residents at the Masjid; if you pray with them, you have to offer it as four Rak`ahs. That is because the authentic Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) indicates that if a traveler

prays behind a resident, he has to offer four Rak`ahs. You have to offer the Maghrib and the Fajr Prayers at the Masjid with the residents for they are not to be shortened, based upon the generality of the Saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ("Whoever hears the call (to Salah) and he does not come to it, then there is no (reward for the) Salah for him except with an excuse.") (Related by Ibn Majah and Al-Daraqutny and graded as Sahih (authentic) by Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim; its Sanad (chain of narrators) accords with the conditions stipulated by Muslim)

He (peace be upon him) said to Ibn Umm Maktum when (he said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid. Do I have Rukhsah (concession) to offer Salah at home?' The Prophet said: 'Do you hear the call to Salah?' He said: 'Yes!' The Prophet said: 'Then respond to it.') (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith)

It is permissible to combine the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, and the Maghrib and `Isha' (Night) Prayers, for you are travelers. But it is better to not combine Salah for you have stayed there and hence you are somewhat considered residents, and so offering congregational Salah at the Masjid is much better and greater in reward. May Allah grant us success!

Q: If a person travels to Jeddah, for instance, is it permissible for him to shorten Salah or is it obligatory to offer congregational Salah (Prayer) at the Masjid (mosque)?

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A: If the traveler is on the way, it is permissible for him to do so. However, if he has reached his destination, he should not pray alone, but rather offer congregational Salah in full. However, if he is still on the road and is alone and the time for prayer is due, there is nothing wrong with him to pray on his own whilst traveling and shorten the four-Rak`ah Salahs (Prayer consisting of four units) to two Rak`ahs.

Shortening prayer upon leaving the city buildings

Q: What is the ruling if one travels after the time of the Zhuhr (Noon) prayer starts and after traveling for ten kilometers he stops to perform the prayer, should he offer the complete prayer or can he shorten the prayer?

A: The opinion of the majority of Muslim scholars is that the traveler is allowed to shorten his prayer as soon as he leaves the city buildings, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not shorten prayer upon traveling except after he left the city buildings. Thus, he used to offer the prayer two Rak'ahs (units) because the crucial factor is the time of performance. Therefore, if the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) announces Adhan (call to prayer) of the Zhuhr or 'Asr (Afternoon) prayer and the traveler starts on a journey and leaves the city buildings, then he is allowed to shorten the four-Rak'ahs prayer into two Rak'ahs. Thus, the crucial factor is the time of offering the prayer, not the time of leaving the city, since he is a traveler during the time of performance.

If a person travels to a city where the distance is more than that which makes it permissible to shorten Salah, where he has a relative, he is considered a traveler

Q: When a person travels from Riyadh to Makkah and passes Al-Qasim on his way, where he has some relatives, and stays with them for two days, is he considered a traveler or resident?

A: He is considered a traveler as long as he is not in his own city, even if he lives with a relative, such as a brother or sister, etc. However, he should not pray on his own, but rather offer Salah (Prayer) in congregation and in full, for congregational Salah is obligatory. However, if he has one or more people with him, they are permitted to shorten the four-Rak`ah Salahs (Prayer consisting of four units) or offer complete congregational Salah with the people of the country. If they intend to stay for more than four days, they should complete the four-Rak`ah Salahs whether the traveler is one person or more.

Ruling on combining the `Asr Prayer with the Jumu`ah Prayer

Q: A questioner inquires: I traveled to Makkah Al-Mukarramah to perform `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage). The time for Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer was due whilst I was near one of the towns on the way. I prayed the Jumu`ah Prayer with the worshipers there in the Masjid (mosque), and after doing that and since I was traveling, I pronounced the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) and prayed the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer. Was what I did permissible? Please advise us, may Allah reward you well!

A: There is no evidence, as far as I know, of the permissibility of combining the `Asr Prayer with the Jumu`ah Prayer. That was not narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or from any of his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), so we should not do that. The person who did that should repeat the `Asr Prayer when its time is due. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Is it permissible for a traveler who offers the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer with some residents to combine the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer with it?

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A: This is not permissible, for the Jumu`ah Prayer is not to be combined with any other Prayer; rather, they should offer the `Asr Prayer at its due time. However, if the traveler offered the Jumu`ah Prayer as Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and did not offer the Jumu`ah Prayer with the residents, then it is permissible to combine the `Asr Prayer with it, for a traveler is not obligated to offer the Jumu`ah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) combined the Zhuhr and `Asr in the Farewell Hajj, on the Day of `Arafah (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) with one Adhan (call to Prayer) and two Iqamahs (calls to start the Prayer) and did not offer the Jumu`ah Prayer. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A Questioner from Riyadh inquires: I performed the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer in Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah). Since I was traveling, I made the intention to combine and shorten the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer with it. When I was about to make Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) to perform the `Asr, the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) called for offering the Funeral Prayer, so I offered it with the congregation, then I offered the `Asr Prayer shortened. Was what I did right, meaning my offering the `Asr Prayer shortened and combined with the Jumu`ah Prayer separating between them with the Funeral Prayer? If not, what should I do? Guide me, may Allah reward you well and prolong your life!

A: The `Asr Prayer is not to be combined with the Jumu`ah Prayer either in travel or

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in residence according to the most preponderant of the opinions of scholars. You have to repeat your Salah (Prayer), because you offered it before its due time in a way that was not permissible to combine Prayers.

With regard to separating between the two combined Prayers, there is nothing wrong with this, for it is prescribed to hasten to bury the dead. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Hurry up with the dead body for, if it is righteous, you are forwarding it to welfare; and if it is otherwise, then you put off an evil thing down your necks.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Besides, separating between the two combined Prayers with a Funeral Prayer is considered a slight break that does not violate the view of scholars who made it a condition for combination. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Praise be to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) that He granted us rain nowadays; we ask Allah, the Most High, the All-Powerful to bless it and make it benefit all Muslim countries. Your Eminence, a dispute arose between some Muslim brothers and me concerning the permissibility of combining the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and the `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer in the case of heavy rain which makes it difficult to go out twice. Appreciate your guidance, may Allah guide you!

A: It is not permissible to combine the Jumu`ah Prayer and Asr Prayer, because of rain or any other cause, for this act is not reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him)

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or the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) as far as we know. Besides, the Jumu`ah Prayer is not equivalent to the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer; rather, it is a separate `Ibadah (worship) and acts of `Ibadah are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion) and none of them can be innovated by mere personal views. May Allah help us all understand the religion and remain adherent to it! He is All-Hearer, Ever Near.

Ruling on combining Prayers for a resident

Q: What is the ruling on some people who combine Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers while they are in their residence?

A: Authentic Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him), including his sayings and acts, indicate that the five obligatory Prayers must be offered at their due times and it is not permissible to combine Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers or Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers except with an excuse, such as sickness, traveling, rain and things that make it hard to come to mosques for each Salah (Prayer) in its due time. Jibril (Gabriel) told the Prophet (peace be upon him) the times of the Five Prayers and he led the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Salah in the beginning and the end of the due time of each Prayer for two days. Jibril said to the Prophet (peace be upon him) after he had led him in the Zhuhr Prayers two times during its time

and `Asr Prayer two times during its time, "The (time of) Prayer is between those two times." Similarly, when he led him offering Maghrib Prayer two times during its time and `Isha' Prayer two times during its time, he said, "The (time of) Prayer is between those two times."

❨It was authentically established that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about that, so he answered the question practically. On the first day, he performed the Five Daily Obligatory Prayers in the beginning of their time, and on the second day, he performed the Five Prayers at the end of their time. He then said, "The time of Prayer is between those two times."❩

As for what is related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) in a Hadith narrated by Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) ❨that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered in Madinah eight Rak`ahs (units of Salah) at one time and seven Rak`ahs at one time❩

it is mentioned in the narration of Muslim of this Hadith in his Sahih that this means Zhuhr, `Asr, Maghrib, and `Isha' and said in his narration, ("...without being in a state of fear or rainfall.") and in another narration of him, ("...without being in a state of fear or traveling.")

The explanation for this is that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked about that and said, "(He did so) in order not to put his nation in a difficult situation." Scholars said that this means 'in order to keep his nation away from difficulty'.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) combined Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers as well as Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers in Madinah for a cause that required this

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in order to remove difficulty and hardship from his Companions; either for a general disease or any other cause which brought difficulty to the Companions on that day. Some scholars said, "This was not a real combination - that is to say he delayed the Zhuhr Prayer to the end of its time and offered `Asr Prayer in the beginning of its time and delayed the Maghrib to the end of its time and offered `Isha' in the beginning of its time.

This was related by Al-Nasa'y on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them), the narrator of the Hadith at hand, as mentioned by Al-Shawkany in his book Nayl Al-Awtar and this is probable. Moreover, Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) did not mention in this Hadith that this act was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) many times even the apparent meaning of the Hadith indicates that this happened once. Imam Abu `Isa Al-Tirmidhy (may Allah confer mercy upon him) said no other Hadith in his book (i.e. Al-Jami`) that attracted so many scholars desisting from acting upon it like this one, in addition to another Hadith regarding the killing of the consumer of Khamr (intoxicant) for the fourth time. He means that scholars agreed that it is not permissible to combine Salah except with a legal excuse.

They also agreed that the Prophet's combination mentioned in the Hadith indicated that there was a legal excuse. The scholars meant to harmonize between this Hadith and many other authentic Hadiths which indicate that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer every Salah in its time and not to combine two Prayers except for an excuse. Similarly, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and all the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and all scholars followed this way and only combined Prayers in the case of a legal excuse. However, it is reported that

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some scholars, as mentioned by the compiler of Nayl Al-Awtar, considered it permissible to combine Prayers provided that this is not taken as a custom. This is an inadmissible view because of the aforementioned evidence and the consensus of scholars before them.

It should be known that this Hadith does not contain anything that contradicts the explicit authentic Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which prove the impermissibility of combining two Prayers without a legal excuse. It complies with them in the meaning and does not contradict them. The words and actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are harmonious, interpret each other, the absolute meaning is to be interpreted by the confined one, and the unspecified Hadiths is to be explained by specified. This also applies to the Glorious Book of Allah; for all its Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) confirm and explain each other. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (Alif-Lâm-Râ. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân and none but Allâh (Alone) knows their meanings]. (This is) a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected (in every sphere of knowledge), and then explained in detail from One (Allâh) Who is All-Wise Well-Acquainted (with all things).) and: (Allâh has sent down the Best Statement, a Book (this Qur'ân), its parts resembling each other (in goodness and truth) (and) oft-repeated.)

These Ayahs state that the Qur'anic Verses, in spite of being accurate and detailed, resemble each other and confirm each other and so does the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah is the One Who brings success.

Q: A questioner from Asiut, Egypt, inquires: If a person wants to travel to a place that is an hour away from their residence by plane, is it permissible for them to combine

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and shorten Salah (Prayer) while staying in the hotel? Is it also permissible to break Sawm (Fast) in Ramadan? Please advise.

A: It is impermissible to shorten Salah or break Sawm if you are a resident, unless you are too sick to observe Sawm or on a journey. If a person intends to travel, it is impermissible for them to shorten Salah before setting off and crossing the borders of the town. Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) intended to undertake a journey, he did not shorten Salah until he left Madinah. No resident or traveler is allowed to offer Salah individually if there is a congregational Salah offered in the area, but must offer Salah with the congregation, according to the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ﴾Whoever hears the Adhan (call to Prayer) and does not answer it, there is no reward for the Salah, except with an excuse.﴿ (Related by Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutny, Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim, with Isnad (chain of narration) meeting the conditions stipulated by Muslim). Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked, "What is an excuse?" He said, "Fear or illness."

﴾A blind man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said, "O, Messenger of Allah! I have no one to guide me to the Masjid (mosque). Can I offer Salah at home?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked, "Do you hear the Adhan?" He said, "Yes." He (peace be upon him) said, "Then, answer it."﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith).

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He (peace be upon him) said, ﴾I considered ordering the Salah to commence, then taking some men with bundles of firewood to burn down the houses of those who did not attend Salah.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "He who desires to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim should persevere in offering the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers when the Adhan is pronounced, for Allah has laid down for your Prophet the paths of right guidance and these (Salahs) are among the paths of right guidance. If you were to offer Salah at home as this man who stays away (from the Masjid) offering Salah at home, you will have abandoned the practice of your Prophet. If you were to abandon the practice of your Prophet, you will have gone astray. There is no man who purifies himself well, then goes to one of the Masjids but Allah will record one good deed for him for every step he takes, raise him a degree, and efface a sin from him. I have seen the time when no one of us stayed away from it (congregational Salah), except a hypocrite well known for his hypocrisy or a sick man, (to the extent that) a man would be brought propped up (due to weakness) between two men until he was set up in a row." Related by Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith).

There are many Hadiths that stress this meaning. Every Muslim, whether a traveler or a resident, should offer congregational Prayer and beware of offering Salah individually, if he hears the Adhan. May Allah grant us success!

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I work in a place where a number of people offer congregational Prayer. I do not join them for the following reasons:

First, they always combine the two Salahs; such as Zhuhr (Noon) with `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers, and Maghrib (Sunset) with `Isha' (Night) Prayers, without any excuse. Second, they do not hold their hands beneath their chest. Is offering Salah with them valid? Please guide me. May Allah reward you.

A: A Muslim is not allowed to combine two Prayers as long as they are healthy and are not on a journey. Since there is no `Illah (effective cause), such as sickness and Istihadah (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period) in case of being a woman, the person has to offer each Salah at its appointed time. It was authentically narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered in Madinah Salah (Prayer) combining Zhuhr Prayer with `Asr Prayer and Maghrib with `Isha' Prayer because of an epidemic that had afflicted the Muslims. It was reported that he (peace be upon him) did not do so except for one time due to this excuse. There is no report that affirms that this act was the Prophet's manner or that he did so frequently. Rather, Ibn `Abbas

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(may Allah be pleased with him) was reported as saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did this act once.

Some held the opinion that combing two Prayers was not in the real sense - that is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) delayed the Zhuhr Prayer to the last moment of its due time and then offered `Asr Prayer at the beginning of its time. He did the same with Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers. It was narrated by Al-Nasa'y with an authentic Isnad (chain of narrators) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delayed Zhuhr until the end of its due time and offered `Asr early when its time begins. He did the same with Maghrib and `Isha'. Hence, he offered each Salah at its appointed time.

This way of combining Prayers is outlined in an authentic report related on the authority of Ibn `Abbas. Consequently, it was not a real combination of Prayers and therefore it should not be taken as a proof of combining Salahs without an excuse.

As far as you are concerned, you may join them in Zhuhr and Maghrib Prayers, but not the `Asr and `Isha' Prayers, which you should offer them at their appointed times.

Ruling on soldiers in frontline military units combining and shortening Salah

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz to the honorable brother, director of the religious affairs in the Royal Land Forces, may Allah grant him success. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!).

Responding to your letter including the request to clarify the Shar`y (Islamically lawful) ruling on how soldiers in frontline military units should offer their Salah (Prayer).

I would like to inform you that if those soldiers have not traveled and are staying in the place where they are deployed, it is obligatory for them to attend the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and offer the quadruple Salah in full. On the other hand, if they travel to their garrison, they are not obliged to attend the Jumu`ah Prayer and they are allowed to shorten and combine the Salah since their residence period is not fixed. May Allah grant all people success to do whatever pleases Him. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

Pilgrims Combining and shortening Salah

Q: Is shortening the Salah (Prayer) restricted to the pilgrims amongst the people of Makkah in the places where the rituals of Hajj are observed or does it include sellers or other residents in these places and who are not among the pilgrims?

A: The preponderant opinion held by scholars in this point is that shortening is to be restricted to the pilgrims amongst the people of Makkah according to the opinion of whoever permits it for them.

As for the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), they view that the people of Makkah should not shorten or combine the Salah since they are not travelers, accordingly they should offer it in full on its prescribed times.

But whoever had permitted this, restricted it to the pilgrims amongst the people of Makkah and this is the most correct, for the Messenger (peace be upon him) did not order them to offer the Salah in full.

As for sellers or those who do not intend to perform Hajj, they should offer the Salah in full and not combine it like other dwellers of Makkah.

Q: Is combining and shortening Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer in `Arafah obligatory or it is permissible to offer them complete in their due time?

A: Combining and shortening Zhuhr and `Asr in the valley of `Uranah in `Arafat with one Adhan (call to Prayer) and one Iqamah (call to start Salah) is a stressed Sunnah performed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the Farewell Hajj. It is not permissible for a believer to go against the Sunnah. Doing this is not obligatory according to the people of knowledge but a stressed Sunnah. In case a traveler has completed his Salah, it is considered valid but shortening is stressed because the Messenger (peace be upon him) did it and said: ﴿Take your (hajj) rituals from me.﴾

It is not permissible for him to go against the Sunnah but to combine and shorten Salah in advance with the people then head to the place where the people stand in `Arafah. In case he offered Salah in `Arafah and couldn't reach the valley of `Uranah, there in no harm and to avoid hardship. Nowadays, people need to avoid crowded places by every lawful means.

Q: Is it permissible for the pilgrims to combine Salah (Prayer) as it is permissible for them to shorten it in Mina on the Day of Tarwiyah (8th of Dhul-Hijjah)? What is the ruling on those who combine Prayer; is it valid?

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A: There is no harm in combining Salah as far as I know, because if shortening is permissible combining will be more preferable because its reasons are numerous unlike shortening which has no reason but travel. It is better not to do it, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not combine Salah in Mina; neither on the Day of Tarwiyah or the Days of Tashriq (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). Muslims should follow the Prophet's (peace be upon him) example for he is the best example to follow.

Q: Was it authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that he combined the Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers, and the Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers, during a journey in which he stayed for a while; such as staying in Makkah waiting for the Hajj, staying in Makkah during the Conquest of Makkah, and staying in Tabuk ?

A: It is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he combined (Prayers) during the Battle of Tabuk while he was staying there. This is related by Muslim on the authority of Mu`adh (may Allah be pleased with him).

As for his stay in Makkah during the Conquest and in the Farewell Hajj, nothing was authentically reported about this. However, some Hadiths express that he (peace be upon him) used to combine Salah in Al-Abtah in the Farewell Hajj. However, this is not explicitly stated, so it is best to leave it and the same is applied in Mina. May Allah grant us success!

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

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Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer

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The virtue of Friday Salah in Islam

All praises and thanks are due to Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn, and all that exists). May peace and blessings be upon the most honorable Prophet; Muhammad!

Muslims should go for Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer in a state of Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), tranquility and reverence in order to attend this blessed event and take part in prayer, Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) and listening to what will benefit them in their religion and their life. Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾O you who believe (Muslims)! When the call is proclaimed for the Salât (prayer) on Friday (Jumu'ah prayer), come to the remembrance of Allâh [Jumu'ah religious talk (Khutbah) and Salât (prayer)] and leave off business (and every other thing). That is better for you if you did but know!﴿

In the next Ayah (Qur'anic verse), Allah (Glorified be He) commands us to carry out what will be of great value in this life and in the Hereafter: ﴾Then when the (Jumu'ah) Salât (prayer) is ended, you may disperse through the land, and seek the Bounty of Allâh (by working, etc.)﴿ that is to say; look for Rizq (sustenance) and seek means of prosperity. ﴾and remember Allâh much: that you may be successful.﴿ Lest you should not be distracted by buying and selling

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, pleasures, and other earthly desires from remembering Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and the means of real success. Real success is only achieved through the remembrance of Allah and obeying His commands. Physical needs should never be given precedence over spiritual and moral needs, nor vice versa. Muslims must be balanced; some should perform worldly tasks like working on farms, others should work in their shops or stores, while others carry out lawful business which Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) makes permissible. This allows all classes of the community to participate in all forms of charitable projects and permissible, useful works. Doing so also helps to console the poor and do favors to people.

When it is time for carrying out the religious obligations that Allah ordains on mankind, a person must hasten to obey Allah and carry out this obligation willingly and dutifully. One should never be distracted from the obedience of Allah. One has to act moderately according to the situation; giving everything its due, while valuing time. One is to fulfill the obligations of Allah, strive to earn a living, and look for means of good and lawful sustenance. It is well-known that Salah is the second and most important pillar of Islam according to the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾The

peak of the matter is Islam and its pillar is Salah.﴿ .

Also, according to the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by those known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish): ﴾"Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): To testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger; to offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly; to pay Zakah (i.e. obligatory charity); to fast during the month of Ramadan; and to perform Hajj

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(Pilgrimage to Mecca)."﴿ . (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Once, the Prophet mentioned the virtue of Salah to his Companions stating: ﴾"Whoever is regular in his Prayers, it will illuminate his face, testify to the firmness of his faith and be [his] cause of salvation on the Day of Judgment. And whoever neglects the Prayers will neither receive such illumination, firmness of faith nor any means of salvation. He will join, on the Day of Resurrection, the company of Korah (Qarun), Pharaoh, Haman and Ubay ibn Khalaf."﴿

This authentic Hadith includes Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and the other five daily prayers as well. It gives glad tidings to those who perform prayers dutifully and perfectly that these prayers will illuminate their faces in this life and in the Hereafter. It will affirm faith and be a cause of salvation on the Day of Judgment. The Hadith also severely warns those who neglect these Prayers that they will neither receive illumination, affirmation of faith, nor any means of salvation; and they will join, on the Day of Resurrection, the company of Pharaoh , Haman Korah, and Ubay ibn Khalaf. This ruling is generally applicable to all the five daily prayers but it is more specifically to Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer. It is also general in referring to their prescribed times along with performing them in congregations.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) classified those who neglect Prayer with the chiefs of disbelief as a means of warning against their heinous acts, and to make it detestable to be the like of these disbelievers If anyone neglects Prayers as a result of being preoccupied with his

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position or authority, he would be similar to Pharaoh - we seek refuge in Allah from doing so - who was tempted by his power and position to the degree that he transgressed all bounds and oppressed his people. He said: "I am your lord, most high", so his final destination was Hellfire. A Muslim should not resemble this disbelieving leader. If one does so and his position distracts him from carrying out the obligations of Allah, one will inevitably join Pharaoh in Hellfire. If any Muslim neglects performing prayers at their due times because of his ministry or his post, he is similar to Haman, the minister of Pharaoh. He will join him on the Day of Judgment in Hellfire. If anyone neglects prayers because of wealth, desires, or self-satisfaction and its pleasures, one will be like Qarun, the merchant from among the Children of Israel and their tyrant who transgressed all bounds, oppressed others, disobeyed Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him) and behaved arrogantly. Allah caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Whoever behaves in this manner will join Qarun on the Day of Judgment. If anyone is distracted by selling, buying, and making transactions, one is resembling Ubay ibn Khalaf the merchant of the people of Makkah. Hence, one will join him in Hellfire. We seek refuge in Allah from this destiny.

We all, as Muslims, must avoid imitating these chiefs of disbelief. A Muslim must be diligent in performing Jumu'ah Prayer and coming early to the Masjid on this day. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾"Let the people desist from neglecting Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayers, or else Allah will seal their hearts and they will be among the negligent."﴿ Related

by Muslim in his Sahih. If someone's heart is sealed

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and becomes heedless and negligent, one will utterly perish. Allah (Exalted be He) states: ﴿Allâh has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, (i.e. they are closed from accepting Allâh's Guidance), and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment.﴾ We ask Allah to keep us safe.

This indicates that anyone who neglects the commands of Allah and does not carry out His obligations is subject to have their heart and hearing sealed, and to have a covering placed over their eyes to the extent that one will never be able to be guided to righteousness or realize it. It is an established fact that Jumu'ah Prayer has great importance and neglecting it is a grievous sin. Hence, Muslims must give great attention to this prayer, be regular in performing it and the other five daily prayers as well. In doing so, one will receive the good that Allah has promised those who worship diligently. We should be mindful of the importance and good consequences of congregating, as it helps us become acquainted, communicate, and cooperate in helping one another in Al-Birr (virtue) and At-Taqwa (righteousness and pity). We can listen to advice and the Khutbah (sermon) and be influenced by it. This leads to great benefits and great reward such as propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice and mutual visitation. Moreover, this leads to sincerely advising each other and cooperating in funding charitable projects. This also makes Muslims much more aware of their religion especially when the Khatib (preacher) prepares his Khutbah (sermon) carefully taking into consideration the importance of focusing on topics of interest relating to everyday life as scholars advise Khatibs to do. The Khatib has a

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great obligation towards people, thus he must strive to prepare his Khutbah well in order to clarify what his fellow Muslims do not know of the legal rulings of Allah. Instructions and guidance should be included in every Khutbah and there also should be some discussion of less known legal rulings and reminders of obligations towards Allah and warnings against prohibited matters. There should be special focus on current issues whose rulings are not clear.

Some people who attend Jumu'ah Prayer are ignorant, others are heedless, and others are attentive. Attentive people can increase their knowledge and realize what could be difficult to recognize individually. Negligent people can be reminded and the ignorant given a chance to learn; consequently, the benefit will be general for all. One of the most tragic phenomena in our countries is neglecting Halaqat (learning circles) and not benefiting from the Khutbah of Jumu'ah. This leads to the increase of ignorance and negligence which are the main causes of diseases of the heart and neglecting Dhikr of Allah. It causes hearts not to accept the correct Manhaj (methodology) due to the accumulation of sins. It is reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that when someone commits certain types of sin, a black spot is stamped on one's heart. If one repents, this spot is cleansed; however, if one persists in committing more sins, the number of spot increases to cover the whole heart with blackness which is called Rân (covering of sins and evil deeds). Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) warns us in the following Ayah (Qur'anic verse): ﴿Nay! But on their hearts is the Rân (covering of sins and evil deeds) which they used to earn.﴾

This means that

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Ran is primarily a result of sins and evil deeds. If someone is used to committing sins easily and abundantly, these sins affect their heart gradually till they blacken the entire heart. At this stage the

black heart begins to deteriorate to the degree that it cannot realize Ma`ruf (that which is judged as good, beneficial, or fitting by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) and cannot recognize Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) as ugly. We must all beware of the disastrous results of sins and repent. Every Muslim should have a great desire to attend learning circles (Halqat), listen to Khutab (sermons), study with fellow Muslims, read useful books if one is literate in order to benefit, and seek guidance and knowledge The most important of these activities is the study of the Glorious Qur'an, reading it regularly, and listening to its recitations; as Allah has made it easy, a guide, and a healing for the illness of our hearts, as He (Glorified be He) states: ﴾Verily, this Qur'ân guides to that which is most just and right﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing."﴿ He (Glorified be He) also states: ﴾(This is) a Book (the Qur'ân) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.﴿ There are many Ayat (Qur'anic verses) in this regard.

It is reported in an authentic Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Recite the Qur'an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite it.﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih. This Hadith indicates that The Glorious Qur'an will come as an intercessor

for those who used to recite and apply it in their lives as mentioned in another Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in which he stated: ﴾On the Day of Resurrection, the Qur'an and those who acted according to it will be brought with Surah al-Baqarah and Surah Al 'Imran preceding them as two clouds, or two black canopies with light between them, or like two flocks of birds in ranks pleading for one who recited them.﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated: ﴾"Whoever reads one letter from the Qur'an will receive a hasanah (good deed) from it (i.e. its recitation), and the hasanah is multiplied by ten. I do not say that Alif- Lam-Meem is (considered as) one letter, rather Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter, and Meem is a letter."﴿ There are many Hadiths in this regard.

Nowadays, many people busy themselves with their own pleasures and with going out for picnicking to the degree that they neglect Jumu'ah prayers. They deprive themselves of listening to admonition and remembrance There negligence has gone on for too long. When man is not regular in attending learning circles, does not listen to Khutab and does not pay attention to the news of Muslim scholars, his sinking into negligence accelerates to the degree that his heart may be sealed and becomes one of the negligent We seek refuge in Allah from this fate. Muslims should give great importance to attending Jumu'ah Prayer and

the other five daily prayers in congregation. Thus, they will benefit from Khutab, lectures and learning circles, and to be good examples for others. If one wishes to go out for a picnic or anything of the like and his vacations are confined to Thursdays, Fridays, and holidays, one should select a nearby place where one can attend Jumu'ah and pray with other Muslims without neglecting it or losing its great benefit.

Concerning what has been mentioned by some people that some countries other than Saudi Arabia pray Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer along with Jumu'ah prayer on the pretext that they are in a large country in which many places are set for Jumu'ah prayer; these numerous Jumu'ah prayers may be invalid, so people should be cautious and pray Zhuhr prayer after finishing Jumu'ah prayer for fear that these Jumu'ahs were performed against their legal prescribed form. This opinion is a gross mistake and carrying it out is Bid'ah.

It is against the rulings of Islam and to the tradition of Muslims in all times and places in the early days of this Ummah (community based on one creed) when the need for multiple Jumu'ah prayers arose. Thus, it is not permissible to perform any prayer which Allah ((Glorified be He) has not ordained. He(Glorified be He) ordains only five prayers in one day and night and on Friday (Jumu'ah) as well as other days of the week. It is not permissible to perform an additional sixth prayer on Fridays, or on any other day of the week as this opposes the legal rulings of Islam and the Ijma` (consensus of scholars) of our Salaf (righteous predecessors). Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴿Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?﴾ The Prophet

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(peace be upon him) stated: ﴿Whoever introduces anything into this affair of ours that is not of it, it is to be rejected.﴾ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

According to the wording of Muslim (may Allah be merciful with him): ﴿"Whoever performs an action which is not in accordance with this matter of ours (Islam) will have it rejected."﴾ This means that his action will not be accepted from him. May Allah grant the Muslim community, governments and peoples guidance, and help them understand the religious rulings and keep steady on the right path, and beware of any contrary matter. He is the Wali (Protector, Supporter, and Helper) and the Most Able to do this.

The least number required to offer Friday prayer

Q: What is the least number required to offer Friday prayer and Khutbah (religious sermon)?

A: There are various opinions among the scholars in this regard and the soundest opinion about this is: three men; the Imam and two men. If there are three men or more who are free and accountable who live in a place, they may perform Jumu`ah and should not pray Zhuhr because the proofs which indicate the legitimacy of Friday prayer include them.

Q: I read in some books that among the stipulations of offering Friday Salah is the existence of forty persons on whom offering prayer is obligatory. However, it was published in Da`wah paper a fatwa of Your Eminence which pointed out that Friday Salah is to be performed when there are two persons other than the Imam (leader in prayer). How can we reconcile these matters?

A: Stipulating a number of forty persons for performing Friday Salah is an opinion of some scholars such as Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (may Allah send mercy upon him) but the preponderant view is that it is permissible to perform it with less than forty. The least necessary number is three persons as mentioned in the preceding Fatwa. This is because of the lack of proofs of stipulating forty persons as well as that the Hadith related regarding the condition of forty attendants is weak as mentioned by Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his book Bulugh Al-Maram.

Q: We work in a mountainous area that does not have any Masjids (mosques) and due to the conditions of our work, it is difficult for us to reach the nearby Masjids. We are few in number. How many Musalli (One who performs Prayer) are required to make the Friday prayer valid?

A: It is obligatory for you to endeavor to perform Jumu'ah Prayer because you can hear

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the call for it and can respond either on foot or by car. Jumu'ah Prayer is a congregational occasion and prayer. Thus, it should gather the people of the village and the residents. Thus, it is obligatory for you to walk and perform it with the Muslims of the village where you work. There is no concession for you to perform Jumu'ah Salah by yourselves unless the distance is too far, in which case you should present an application for Dar Al-Ifta (the House of Fatwa) seeking fatwa if you are from the Kingdom. Then Dar Al-Ifta (the House of Fatwa) should investigate the matter through sending a letter to the court that will inform it about the reality of your matter. Then, Dar Al-Ifta (the House of Fatwa) will issue a fatwa in this regard. Yet, the believer should exert his utmost effort to perform Jumu'ah Salah with his brothers because this involves a great blessing and he will receive a great reward and his sins will be removed with every step he moves toward the Masjid. Thus, he should share this good and be keen to perform Jumu'ah Salah even if the Masjid is far away. This is because it involves abundant reward and because he will gather with his brothers, multiply their number, know their conditions, and gain new acquaintances in order for all Muslims to cooperate in righteousness and piety and help one another for the good of all. If there is an obvious hardship, then there is no harm in their seeking fatwa through sending an application to Dar Al-Ifta (the House of Fatwa) who will investigate the matter In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills).

The Jumu`ah (Friday) Salah is valid even when catching the last Rak'ah

Q: A brother asks: If a person comes to the Masjid (mosque) on Friday to find that the Salah has finished and that there is someone making up for one Rak`ah he missed performing with the Imam, when joining such a person, should he complete his Salah as an ordinary Zhuhr (noon prayer) or as a Jumu`ah (Friday prayer)? If after performing one Rak`ah, this last person is joined by someone else, then should the new person complete his Salah as ordinary Zhuhr or as a Jumu`ah (Friday prayer)?

A: It is obligatory upon such two persons to complete their Salah as an ordinary Zhuhr (noon prayer) because Jumu`ah (Friday prayer) has finished. He can catch Jumu`ah (Friday prayer) if he joins the Imam even at the second Rak`ah, then he is to complete one's Salah as Jumu`ah (Friday prayer).

If he comes only after the Imam has said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), or after the Imam has performed the second Ruku` (bowing) i.e. while performing Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) or during Sujud (prostration) in the second Rak`ah, then he should not complete it as Jumu`ah (Friday prayer), rather, he should perform it as ordinary Zhuhr (noon prayer) because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who catches a Rak`ah of the Friday Salah should pray another one with it. By doing so, he will complete his prayer.﴿ This Hadith indicates that if a person does not join the Imam in one Ruku` at least, then he is not considered to be

catching Jumu`ah (Friday prayer). Rather, he should perform ordinary Zhuhr (noon prayer). This is the prescribed manner.

When catching and joining someone making up for a Rak`ah that he has missed, he should complete his Salah as an ordinary Zhuhr (noon prayer) and not as Jumu`ah (Friday prayer). It should be noticed that ordinary the Zhuhr (noon prayer) is to be performed in the afternoon whereas Jumu`ah (Friday prayer) can be performed before noon at the sixth hour according to the most reliable view of the scholars' two views but what is better and to be on the safe side is that it should be performed in the afternoon according to the opinion of the majority of scholars. As for the ordinary Zhuhr (noon prayer), it is permissible to be performed only in the afternoon as unanimously agreed by Muslim scholars. May Allah grant us success!

Q: If I enter the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is performing Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) in Jumu`ah (Friday prayer), should I complete it as Jumu`ah (Friday prayer) or as Zhuhr (noon prayer)?

A: A latecomer who attends the prostration or Tashahhud in the Friday Salah should complete his Salah as an ordinary Zhuhr, not as a Jumu`ah (Friday prayer) because the Salah is only caught by joining the Imam in one Rak`ah at least. This is based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾He who attends one Rak`ah (in congregation) is considered to be attended the whole prayer (in congregation).﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾He who catches a Rak`ah of the Friday prayer should pray another one with it.

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By doing so, his prayer is complete.﴿

According to these two Hadiths, it is evident that a person who does not catch one Rak`ah at least in Jumu`ah (Friday prayer) will miss it. Thus, he should complete his Salah as Zhuhr. May Allah grant us success!

Whoever could not follow the Imam during Jumu`ah (Friday) Salah owing to interruption in electricity

Q: A group of people offered Salah on the way to the ground floor of the Masjid (mosque) during Jumu`ah Salah and while offering the Salah, the electricity went off and people could not hear the Imam. Someone moved forward and led them during the rest of the Salah. What is the ruling on the Salah of those people taking into consideration that the person completed the prayer as a Friday Salah? Moreover, what is the ruling if no one proceeded and led the people; should each of them complete his Salah himself and if this is permissible, should they complete it as Zhuhr (Noon) Salah or Jumu`ah Salah, for they listened to the orator and started the Salah with the Imam and caught up with him one Rak`ah (unit of prayer)?

A: According to what the questioner mentioned, the prayer of all the people involved is valid for if a person catches up one Rak`ah of Friday Salah, he is regarded as having offered it as

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stated by the authentic Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). If none of them proceeded and led them during the last Rak`ah and they offered one Rak`ah to complete the Salah, it will be sufficient for them like the one who missed one Rak`ah, for he offers the Rak`ah with the Imam and offers the remaining Rak`ah alone according to the general meaning of the Prophet's saying (peace be upon him), (He who attends one Rak`ah (in congregation) is considered to have attended the whole prayer (in congregation).) May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on those who miss Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and offer it as Zhuhr (noon) Prayer

Q: If I do not offer Jumu`ah Prayer in congregation, should I offer it as two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) at home with the intention of Jumu`ah or offer it as four Rak`ahs with the intention of Zhuhr?

A: Those who can not offer Jumu`ah in congregation due to a legal excuse such as sickness or other reasons, may offer Zhuhr instead of Jumu`ah. Likewise, women may offer Zhuhr and a traveler and a Bedouin may also observe Zhuhr according to the Sunnah and the view of the majority of scholars and there is no regard for those who differ from their view. Similarly, those who deliberately abandon it should repent to Allah and offer it as Zhuhr.

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Al-Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer is not obligatory on women

Q: There are some issues received that I like to question about so as to remove all expected doubts; what is the ruling on women who offer Jumu`ah Prayer at home?

A: Jumu`ah is not obligatory on women, but only on men as well as the congregational Salah (prayer) which is not obligatory on women but only on men. It is an act of Sunnah that women offer Salah in their homes and it is better for them to offer other congregational Salahs at home too but if they offer them in congregation, it will be sufficient for them if they were decent and wearing Hijab (veil). They have to go there without applying perfume and there is no harm in them doing this in order to benefit from the Khutbah (religious sermon). They have to be careful, wear Hijab, cover themselves properly, and keep away from seditions. They should not apply perfume or adornment but wear Hijab and offer Salah in congregation as this was done by some women who used to offer Salah with the Messenger (peace be upon him) but he said: ﴿They may go out (to the mosque) wearing no perfume.﴾ i.e.

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without fragrance in order not to seduce men. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿And their houses are better for them.﴾ However, if they offer Salah in congregation while covered with Hijab and keeping carefully away from the causes of evil, temptation, and bad odor, there is no harm.

Hence, we know that it is not obligatory on women to offer Jumu`ah but they must offer Zhuhr at home. If they offer it in congregation, it is sufficient and they do not need to offer Zhuhr such as the patient who is given the concession to offer Zhuhr instead of Jumu`ah; if he offers Jumu`ah in congregation, it will be sufficient for him. Likewise, the slave who is legally exempted from the obligation of attending the Jumu`ah Prayer but he has to offer Zhuhr; if he offers Jumu`ah in congregation, it will be sufficient. The same ruling goes for the traveler; if he offers it in congregation it will be sufficient and will be instead of Zhuhr. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on offering prayer directly after another prayer

Q: I am asking about the explanation of the following Hadith: It is reported on the authority of Al-Sa'ib Ibn Yazid that Mu`awiyah said, "When you offer Friday Prayer do not offer another prayer after it unless you speak or go out, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered us not to offer a prayer after another unless one speaks or goes out."

A: This Hadith is related by Muslim in his Sahih and it indicates that when a Muslim offers Friday Prayer or any one of the obligatory prayers, it is not permissible to offer another prayer after it unless s/he utters something or leaves the Masjid (mosque). He may recite what Allah prescribed as supplications such as, "astaghfir Allah (I seek Allah's forgiveness) three times, Allahumma Anta Al-Salam Wa Minka As-Salam, Tabarakta Ya Dhal-Jalal Wal-Ikram. (Oh Allah, You are Al-Salam (the source of peace) and from You is all peace. Blessed are You, the Possessor of Glory and Honor)" after Taslim (salutation ending prayer) as well as other recommended supplications. Reciting supplications or going out of the Masjid serves to affirm the conclusion of the prayer to avoid the thought that the second prayer is part of the first prayer.

It is important to distinguish the prayer already performed from the prayer about to be offered. Therefore, when one pronounces the Taslim of Friday Prayer, one should not offer supererogatory prayer immediately after it without doing so, lest he or others should think that the supererogatory prayer is connected with it or necessarily required.

This applies to other obligatory prayers such as Zhuhr (Noon), `Asr (Afternoon), Maghrib (Sunset), `Isha' (Night), and Fajr (Dawn) Prayers. It is necessary to separate prayers by speaking such as reciting supplications or any other words or going out of the Masjid in order to remove the thought that the next prayer is connected with the preceding one.

Listening attentively during a Khutbah (religious sermon)

Our Muslim brother from Riyadh Al-Khubara' says: When the time of forbidding the playing with pebbles and using Siwak (a teeth cleaning twig made from a twig of the Salvadora persica tree and known as the arak tree) start; when the Imam ascends the pulpit or at the beginning of the Khutbah Khutbah (sermon), because many times I watch people who do not stop using Siwak except when the Imam begins the Khutbah and some of them use Siwak during the Khutbah? Please, dear Shaykh, guide us to the right! May Allah reward you!

A: The Sunnah is to listen attentively to the Khutbah and stop using Siwak and all other things from the moment the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) begins the Khutbah until he finishes according to the authentic Hadiths reported in this regard.

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As for those who enter the Masjid while the Imam is delivering the Khutbah, they may offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) before they sit

because the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) says: (When any one of you comes on Friday while the Imam delivers the sermon, he should observe two Rak'ahs (units of prayers) and should make them short.)

Q: Brother A.H. from Cairo says: Is it permissible to speak when the Imam pauses between the two Khutbahs of Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer. Is it permissible to place the forefinger on the mouth to warn someone against speaking during the Khutbah?

A: It is permissible to speak when the Imam pauses between the two Khutbahs when necessary. It is also permissible to motion to someone not to speak during the Khutbah in order to keep silent. It is permissible to motion during Salah if necessary. May Allah grant us success!

Permissibility of invoking Allah's Peace and Blessings upon the Prophet

(may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) when he is mentioned during the Khutbah

Q: Brother A.M.S. from the State of Arizona in the United States of America inquires: If the Prophet (peace be upon him) is mentioned while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) delivers the Friday Khutbah (sermon), is it permissible to invoke Allah's Peace and Blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him)?

A: It is permissible to invoke Allah's Peace and Blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the Khutbah of Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, `Eid (Festival) or circles of Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (May his nose be soiled with dust he in whose presence mention is made of me and he does not invoke Allah's Peace and Blessing on me.) May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah!

Q: What is the ruling on raising one's hands while the Khatib (preacher) makes Du`a' (supplication) for Muslims in the second Khutbah, kindly support your answer with evidences. May Allah reward you well!

A: It is not Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) to raise one's hands in Du`a', either in the Friday Khutbah or

the `Eid Khutbah, whether on the part of the Imam or Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer). It is prescribed to listen attentively to the Khatib and say Amen after he makes Du`a' quietly without raising one's voice. As for raising the hands, this is not Mashru`.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands either in the Friday Khutbah or the `Eid Khutbah. When some of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) saw some rulers raise their hands in the Friday Khutbah, they denounced this, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise them. Yet, if he asks for rain during the Friday Khutbah, then he may raise his hands when praying for rain, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to raise his hands in that situation. So if he prays for rain in the Friday Khutbah or in the `Eid Khutbah, it is prescribed for him to raise hands following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Saying Yarhamuk-Allah to a person who sneezes during the Friday Khutbah

Q: What is the ruling on saying Yarhamuk Allah (may Allah have mercy upon you) to a person who sneezes while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) is delivering the Friday Khutbah (sermon)?

A: It is not permissible to do this, for it is obligatory to keep silent. A person who sneezes in Salah (Prayer) is not to be told Yarhamuk Allah, so a person who sneezes while the Imam is delivering the Khutbah is not to be told Yarhamuk Allah. May Allah grant us success!

Continual passing of wind necessitates

performing Wudu` after the time of Salah is due

Q: Brother `A.S. from Riyadh says: I suffer from continual passing of wind that makes me perform Wudu` (ablution) right before each Salah (Prayer). On Fridays, I have to make Wudu` twice before and after the first Adhan (call to Prayer) is announced. What is the ruling on this? Please, advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: One who suffers from continual passing of wind or from urinary incontinence has to make Wudu' for every Salah after the time of Salah is due. The Salah will be valid even if one releases wind or urine during Wudu` or Salah. The same ruling is equally applied to the case of Mustahadah (woman who suffers from excess discharge of blood after normal period of menstruation expires). Addressing her, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Perform ablution for every prayer.﴿ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith) It should be made clear to the questioner that Wudu' has to be performed after the time of Salah is due if one is suffering from continual passing of wind or from urinary incontinence. It will be valid if this person performs Wudu' and

offers the Friday Prayer before the noontime. There is an authentic report narrated from the Prophet to the effect that Friday Prayer offered before noontime is valid. This view is held by a group of scholars. However, it is preferable, as per all the Hadiths narrated in this regard, to perform it after noontime to avoid disagreement with the majority of scholars who are of the view that, like the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, it is not valid to offer the Friday Prayer before noontime. This view is based on the Hadiths which state that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer the Friday Prayer after noontime. May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on offering the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer

if the `Eid day coincides with Friday

Q: What is the ruling on offering the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer if Friday is the day of `Eid? Is offering the Jumu`ah Prayer on the `Eid day obligatory upon all Muslims? Some people say that if the `Eid day coincides with Friday, then it is not necessary to attend the Jumu`ah Prayer.

A: The Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who regularly delivers Khutbah (sermon) on Friday has to attend at the Masjid to lead the attendants in the Jumu`ah Prayer. The Prophet

(peace be upon him) used to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer on the day of `Eid. He would offer the `Eid Prayer in the morning and offer the Jumu`ah Prayer at noontime. He would read Surah Al-`Ala (Surah number 87) and Al-Ghashiyah (Surah number 88) in the two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of `Eid and Jumu`ah. This is based on the authentic Hadith narrated by Al-Nu`man ibn Bashir (may Allah be pleased with them both). It is permissible, however, for one who attends the `Eid Paryer not to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer. He may offer it as Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer at home or in congregation. However, it is better to attend the Jumu`ah Prayer with other Muslims. There is nothing wrong with a person if he does not offer the Jumu`ah Prayer on account of having offered the `Eid Prayer. He has to offer the Zhuhr alone or in congregation. May Allah grant us success!

It is not a condition for the Imam of the Jumu`ah Prayer

to be of upright or infallible

Q: What is the ruling on some people who do not offer the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer on the pretext that it should not be offered except behind just and upright Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer)?

A: Allah (may He be Praised) has made it incumbent upon Muslims to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer on the condition that they are settled in one place, whether it is a big city or a small village. Scholars have held many different views over the number of people required to offer

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the Jumu`ah Prayer. The most preponderant of these views is that the minimum number required is three. There exists no evidence which stipulates extra number of people. Scholars have, however, unanimously agreed that the validity of the Jumu`ah Prayer does not necessitate that the Imam be of an upright or infallible character. The Salah can be offered behind any Imam, whether he is righteous or of immoral character so long as he is a Muslim whose immorality does not put him beyond the pale of Islam. Accordingly, those who stipulate that in order for the Jumu`ah Prayer to be valid the Imam must be upright or faultless have introduced Bid`ah (innovation in religion) which is not sanctioned by Allah. There is no basis in Allah's Purified Shar` (Law) to support this condition. Some other scholars have held the view that it is not valid to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer in small villages. However, this is a weak view which is not substantiated by evidence from the Purified Shar` (Law). This latter view has been falsely attributed to `Aly ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him). The Jumu`ah Prayer was performed in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah after early Muslims had migrated to it. At that time, the Madinah was considered a small village. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also performed the Jumu`ah Prayer when he arrived at Madinah. He continued to offer it there until his death. During the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Jumu`ah Prayer was offered in Bahrain in a village known as Jawatha. The Prophet is not reported to have objected to this.

To sup up, the Muslims must perform the Jumu`ah Prayer in villages and cities in conformity with the proofs of Shari`ah (Islamic Law) of the Qur'an and Sunnah (whatever reported from the Prophet) and to get the great benefits attained by establishing the Jumu`ah Prayer such as

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encouraging Muslims to do good deeds, admonishing and teaching them beneficial lessons, getting them to know one another and co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety, and helping them gain other great benefits.

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Ruling on prisoners' offering of Jumu`ah Prayer

and congregational Salah behind one Imam in their cell

From `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz to the respected brother, director of administration of religious affairs at public security. May Allah grant you success!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!). To proceed:

In reference to your letter No. 275 dated 1/5/1405 A.H in which you inquire about the prisoners' offering of Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer behind an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who leads them in their cells using a loudspeaker and due to the fact that this important issue interests public opinion, I thought of referring it to Council of Senior Scholars. The council examined it in its twenty-sixth session that was held in At-Ta'if on 25/10/1405. After close examination of the issue and researching the views held by scholars in this regard, the council issued a Fatwa stating that they did not agree that prisoners offer the Jumu'ah Prayer or congregational Salah (Prayer) behind one Imam who leads them via loudspeakers whilst they are in their prison cells. The reason is that they are not obliged

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to perform Jumu'ah Prayer since they are not allowed to go to the Masjid (mosque). This is the same Fatwa delivered by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ibrahim (may Allah be merciful with him) No. 762 dated 11/10/1388 AH. But anyone who is able to attend Jumu'ah Prayer in the prison Masjid - if there is one there - should pray it in congregation. Otherwise a person is not obliged to perform Jumu'ah Prayer and should offer Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer instead. The group in each cell should offer the five obligatory daily Salahs in congregation inside their cells if it is not possible for them to gather in a Masjid or in one place. May Allah guide all Muslims to what pleases Him.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!).

General President of Administration of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah and Guidance

Prescription of the first Adhan for Jumu`ah Prayer

Q: A questioner from Egypt says: "I noticed that Masjids (mosques) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announce Adhan (call to Prayer) twice for the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, which is not a correct Islamic practice. All books of Sunnah (whatever was reported from the Prophet) are in favor of the opinion that once the Imam ascends the Minbar (pulpit), only one Adhan is announced. Kindly refer this issue to the concerned authorities like Dar Al-Ifta' (House of Fatwa) which is presided over by His Eminence Shaykh `Abdul-`Aziz ibn Baz in order to clarify the truth of the matter."

A: All praise be to Allah. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Allah's Messenger, his Companions and whosoever follows their guidance! To proceed:

It is true, as stated by the questioner, that during the Prophet's lifetime there was a single Adhan for Jumu`ah Prayer, and Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) was announced right after the Prophet (peace be upon him) would conclude the Khutbah (sermon). Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) ascended the Minbar to deliver the Khutbah, the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) would announce Adhan and then the Prophet would start delivering the two Khutbahs. Afterwards the Iqamah was announced.

This practice is well-known to have taken place during the Prophet's lifetime as has been stated by the questioner. This matter is known to the people of knowledge and Iman (faith). When

the number of Muslims living in Madinah increased during the reign of the Rightly-Guided Caliph `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), he thought of introducing a second Adhan which came to be known as Adhan-Awwal (first call to Prayer). This Adhan was intended to draw the attention of Muslims towards the Jumu`ah Prayer so that they would prepare to go to Masjids sometime before the ordinary Adhan was announced. The same practice was adopted by the

Companions including `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him), `Abdurrahman ibn `Awf, Az-Zhubayr ibn Al-`Awwam, Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah (may Allah be pleased with them all), and other great and renowned Companions. The practice was put into effect by Muslims in most Islamic countries in order to be in line with the practice of the Rightly-Guided Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him). It was also adopted later by the fourth Rightly-Guided Caliph `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) and the rest of the Companions.

Thus, the practice first took place during `Uthman's caliphate and was later followed by most Muslims of all times and places until our present time. Ever since Muslims have been adopting the practice introduced by `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) which was in the best interest of Muslims. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with adopting the practice which `Uthman has introduced. This view is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: (You must follow my Sunnah and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Stick to them and hold fast to them.) `Uthman, who was already one of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, saw that the introduction of this practice was to serve the interest of the Muslims best. It was for this reason that Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body) later adopted this practice and deemed nothing wrong with it as

being part of the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, `Uthman, `Aly, and the Companions of that time (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Q: When and why was Adhan-Awwal (first call to Friday Prayer) prescribed? Is it true that `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) abolished the practice of `Uthman? I heard, while being in Makkah, that Masjids in Saudi Arabia announce Adhan twice on Friday. How can a Sunni Muslim country like Saudi Arabia introduce such a Bid`ah (innovation in religion)?

A: The announcement of two Adhans for Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer first took place during the reign of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) due to the increasing number of Muslims at that time. The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' issued a fatwa regarding this issue. The fatwa goes:

It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (You must follow my Sunnah and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Stick and hold fast to them...)

During the Prophet's lifetime, Adhan for Jumu`ah Prayer was announced the moment when the Prophet (peace be upon him) ascended the Minbar (pulpit). This same practice was followed during the time of Abu Bakr, and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). When the number of Muslims increased during the caliphate of `Uthman, he ordered that Adhan-Awwal be announced on Friday. This act of `Uthman can not be viewed as Bid`ah (innovation in religion) based on the previous Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Muslims to follow the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs.

Al-Bukhari, Al-Nasa`iy, Al-Tirmidhy, Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud narrated on the authority of Ibn Shihab who said: "As-Sa'ib ibn Yazid told me that Adhan for the Jumu`ah Prayer would start at the moment when the Khatib (preacher) ascended the Minbar on Friday. This took place during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr and `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). When the number of Muslims increased during `Uthman's caliphate, he ordered that another Adhan be announced on Friday. The Adhan was announced at a place known as Al-Zawra'. It became an established practice from that time on.

In his commentary on Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith) of Al-Bukhari, Al-Qastalany stated that the rationale for calling the Adhan introduced by `Uthman the third Adhan was because it was an addition to the Adhan announced at the time the Khatib (preacher) ascended the Minbar and the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer). Iqamah is also called Adhan as both announce that the time for Salah (Prayer) has become due. Exercising his Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings), `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) added this Adhan when the number of Muslims increased. This Adhan received tacit approval of all the Companions. It later became a tacit Ijma` (consensus of opinion). Allah alone grants success!

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The ruling on holding Jumu`ah Prayer

at two or more Masjids in one locality

Praise be to Allah alone. May Allah's peace be upon the seal of all Prophets, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

To continue: We received an important question which reads:

Q: What is the ruling on holding Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer at two or more Masjids (mosques) in one locality? Provide us with elaborate evidence.

A: The Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars) are of the view that it is prohibited to hold Jumu`ah Prayer at a number of Masjids of one locality unless there is a need for that. Throughout his life in Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to hold only one Jumu`ah at his Masjid. The same practice was adopted by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs Abu Bakr, `Umar `Uthman and `Aly (may Allah be pleased with them all). This was also the case with all Muslim countries in the early days of Islam. The reason is that the Purified Shar` (Law) encourages offering Salah (Prayer) in congregation. When Muslims gather together in one place to offer

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the Jumu`ah and Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer), there prevails among them a spirit of co-operation in doing righteous and pious deeds as they establish the rituals of Islam. This also develops among them the spirit of unity, affection, friendliness, understanding Islam and helping one another do good deeds. In addition, Allah grants greater reward to Muslims who gather in multitudes to offer Salah. Besides, enemies of Islam become enraged whenever they see Muslims united upon one word.

There are many texts in the Qur'an and Sunnah (whatever reported from the Prophet) encouraging the unity of Muslims and warning against their disunity and breaking into sects. One Ayah (Qur'anic verse) reads: ﴾And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allâh (i.e. this Qur'ân), and be not divided among yourselves﴿ In another Ayah Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them.﴿

According to one authentic Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾Allah is pleased with you when you do three things: He is pleased that you worship Him without ascribing any partner to Him, that you hold fast unto the rope of Allah, that you are not divided, and that you give good counsel to the one to whom Allah gives command over you.﴿

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Based on the proofs and reasons mentioned above, it is clear that people of one locality should, whenever possible, hold and attend the Jumu`ah Prayer at one Masjid in the same manner they gather at an open place to offer Salat-ul-`Eid.

However, there is nothing wrong with holding Jumu`ah Prayers at two or more Masjids of one locality if need persists. This is the most correct of the two views held by scholars. This may happen at larger localities where people may find it hard to gather at one Masjid. The same applies to the case when the Masjid can not embrace the large number of the residents of a big area. When the far flung city of Baghdad was constructed, Muslims used to hold two Jumu`ah Prayers, one at the eastern side of the city and the other at the western side. This took place in the middle of the second century of Hijrah (Prophet's migration to Madinah). None of the renowned scholars at that time is reported to have disapproved of this practice which was dictated by circumstances. When Amir Al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Believers) `Aly ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was informed that there lived in Kufa some weak people who had difficulty going out to the desert to attend Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer), he ordered someone to help them arrange for Salat-ul-`Eid in the vicinity. In the meantime, `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) led the multitudes in Prayer at the desert.

The same applies to the Jumu`ah Prayer if difficulty is imposed. Many scholars have stated that

it is permissible to hold Jumu`ah Prayer at more than one Masjid when necessary. Mwaffaq Ad-Din Abu Muhammad `Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Qudamah (may Allah be merciful with him) stated in his book Al-Mughni P. 184, Part 2 when coming across a quotation attributed to Abu Al-Qasim Al-Khurafi (may Allah be merciful with him): "If the Muslim country happens to be large and a need to build a number of Masjids is persistent, then it will be permissible to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer at all these Masjids." Commenting on this quotation, Ibn Qudamah states: "In brief, whenever the Muslim country happens to be larger to the point that Muslims find it difficult to gather in one Masjid due to remote

distances between towns like Baghdad and Asbahan or other similar big towns, it will be permissible to offer the Jumu`ah at any Masjid." This view is held by `Ata'. Abu Yusuf said that this may be permissible only in Baghdad because Hudud (prescribed penalties) are executed in two places there and the Jumu`ah has to be offered at the place where Hudud are executed. This means that if there exists a Muslim country where Hudud are executed in two places, it will be permissible to offer the Jumu`ah there. This same view is held by Ibn Al-Mubarak. Abu Hanifah, Malik and Al-Shafi`i (may Allah be merciful with them) are of the opinion that it is not permissible to hold the Jumu`ah Prayer at various places of one locality. This is based on the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs used to hold Jumu`ah only at one Masjid. Had this been permissible, they would have permitted Muslims to offer it in other Masjids. Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: "The Jumu`ah has to be held at Al-Masjid Al-Jami` (the large mosque where Jumu`ah [Friday] Prayers are held) where the leader of Muslims usually performs Salah."

Al-Muwaffaq (may Allah be merciful with him) added: "Since the Jumu`ah is a Salah

in which people's gathering is prescribed and Khutbah (sermon) is delivered, it will be permissible to offer it at any place like Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer). It was authentically reported that `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) used to offer Salat-ul-`Eid in an open place in the desert and would appoint Abu Mas`ud Al-Badri to lead weak Muslims in town. As for the fact that only one Jumu`ah Prayer was held during the Prophet's lifetime, the reason is that the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) would deem it best to listen to the Khutbah delivered by the Prophet, the main legislator of rulings and conveyer of the Message of Islam. They would pay no attention to the fact that they might have been living somewhere very far from the Prophet's Masjid. When lands of the Muslim world extended, it became permissible to hold the Jumu`ah Prayer at various Masjids. No one is known to have disapproved of this practice which later became Ijma` (consensus of scholars). The above statement of Ibn `Umar means that the Jumu`ah Prayer should not be offered in small Masjids instead of Al-Masjid Al-Jami`.

There is no rationale behind holding Jumu`ah Prayer at a place where Hudud are executed. Abu Dawud said: 'I heard Ahmad (may Allah be merciful with him) saying: 'Which Hadd (prescribed penality) used to be executed in Madinah? When Mus`ab ibn `Umayr came to Madinah, he led forty people in Jumu`ah Prayer.' However, the Jumu`ah Prayer should not be held in more than one Masjid in one area unless there is a reasonable necessity. If holding Juma`ah Prayer in two Masjids is enough, it will not be permissible to hold it in a third one. No one among the scholars is known to have held a different view. When `Ata' was told that the residents of Basra were incapable of gathering in one Al-Masjid Al-Jami`, he replied: 'It is permissible for every group of Muslims to gather at their Masjid and they do not have to go to Al-Masjid Al-Jami`.' However, the preponderant opinion is the one held by the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars). The reason is that neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor any of his Rightly-Guided Caliphs are known to have held more than one Jumu`ah unless there was a reasonable necessity. Rulings of Shari`ah (Islamic Law) can not be passed without proofs."

When asked about the permissibility of holding the Jumu`ah Prayer at Al-Qal`ah Masjid in Damascus, Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful with him)

replied: "Yes. It is permissible to hold Jumu`ah Prayer there as it is considered to be another city like the case with different towns in Egypt or Cairo. Even if it is not considered to be another town, it is permissible to hold more than one Jumu`ah prayer in larger cities when necessary. This is the view held by most scholars. When Baghdad was constructed, Muslims used to hold two Jumu`ah Prayers,

one at the eastern side of the city and the other at the western side. Most scholars have permitted that.

Based on what we mentioned above, it becomes clear to the questioner that it is permissible to hold more than one Jumu`ah Prayer at different Masjids of one locality when there is a need for it. This need may include narrowness of the Masjid, or vastness of the locality which makes it difficult for Muslims to gather at one Masjid. This may also take place if there are two disputing tribes living in one Muslim locality. If their gathering in one Masjid is expected to bring about fighting with each other, then each tribe can have a Masjid of its own.

Here I need to stress an important matter: Some

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Muslims nowadays offer the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer after the Jumu`ah Prayer under the pretext that they do this as a precautionary measure to ensure the validity of the Jumu`ah. This practice, in fact, constitutes an act of Munkar (Islamically disapproved act). Every Muslim has to disregard and disapprove of this practice. The reason is that Allah (Glorified be He) has made it obligatory upon Muslims to offer only five obligatory Prayers a day whether on Friday or any other day. How then can some people make it obligatory to offer six obligatory Prayers on Friday by offering the Zhuhr Prayer following the Jumu`ah Prayer! This is not permissible even if they claim that it is only commendable to do this practice. This is because such a practice falls under the category of Bid`ah (innovation in religion). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would constantly recite these words while delivering the Friday Khutbah: (The best speech is that embodied in the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. The most evil affairs are their innovations; and every innovation is an error.) Related by Muslim in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith). It is also reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.) In the version narrated by Muslim the Hadith states: (He who does any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.)

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We ask Allah to grant all Muslims good understanding of His Din (religion), to hold them steadfastly to His Shari`ah and to guide them to refrain from whatever contradicts it. Allah has power over all things. Praise be to Allah, Lord of all creation.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon His Servant and Messenger Muhammad, his family, Companions and whosoever follows them in righteousness til the Day of Resurrection!

Dictated by one who is in need of his Lord's pardon

`Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz

Head of the Islamic University at Madinah

The ruling on performing Jumu`ah Prayer in villages

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the two respected brothers 'A.'A.F and M.S. may Allah guide them both to speak tell the Truth, practice it, and increase their knowledge of the Shari`ah and Iman (Faith/belief)!

As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I received your message and read carefully your difference regarding the ruling on establishing Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer in villages. I also concluded that you chose me as an arbitrator to end this dispute. First, I ask Allah to make us advocates of guidance and supporters of Al-Haqq and to grant us all full understanding of His Din (religion) and adherence to this understanding; He is the best one to be sought. It is clear that Al-Haqq is the objective of Muslims who must hold it whenever they find it. It is also clear that our reference in these disputed cases is the Book of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) the Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿

Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge).﴿ He (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Say: "Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, he (Messenger Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) is only responsible for the duty placed on him (i.e. to convey Allâh's Message) and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on the right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to convey (the message) in a clear way (i.e. to preach in a plain way)."﴿

I have examined the evidence of those who are of the opinion that establishing Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer in villages is Wajib (obligatory) and those who are of the opinion that it is not Wajib but invalid. I saw that those who adopt the first opinion represent the Jumhur (the dominant majority of scholars) who are supported by many proofs and accurate evidence. This becomes clearer by the fact that Allah (Exalted be He) ordains establishing Jumu'ah Prayer on His servants in His (Exalted be He) statement: ﴾O you who believe (Muslims)! When the call is proclaimed for the Salât (prayer) on

Friday (Jumu'ah prayer), come to the remembrance of Allâh [Jumu'ah religious talk (Khutbah) and Salât (prayer)] and leave off business (and every other thing).)

Also the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ("Let some people desist from neglecting Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayers, or else Allah will seal their hearts and they will be among the negligent.") Related by Muslim in his Sahih .

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also performed Jumu'ah Prayer in Al-Madinah though it was like a village in the early years of Hijrah (Prophet's migration to Madinah). Moreover, he (peace be upon him) approved 'As'ad ibn

Zurarah's establishment of Jumuah Prayer at Naqi` Al-Khadamat, a place which was more like a village than a town. It has never been authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) disapproved of that. The Hadith reported in this regard has a good chain of narrators. Those who found an Illah (effective cause) for its weakness due to the presence of Ibn Ishaq in its chain of narrators are mistaken because he declared that he has heard it, which clears any accusation of Tadlis (misrepresentation resulting from a Hadith narrator who provides misleading information about his shaykh or the chain of narration), and because the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (Pray as you have seen me praying.) We know for sure that he prayed Jumu'ah in Al-Madinah since he migrated to it and he (peace be upon him) approved of what the people did in Jawatha,) a village of Bahrain when they established Jumu'ah Prayer at their village. The Hadith referring to this approval is reported in the Sahih of Bukhari .

It is also one of the five daily Prayers on Friday, which is obligatory on villagers as well as townspeople alike; like Zhuhr (noon) Prayer which is also obligatory on Muslims everyday other than Friday. The establishment of Jumu'ah Prayer for Bedouins and travelers is excused because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order them to establish it and because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not establish it on his travels. Hence, it becomes obligatory in cases other than traveling; namely in villages and towns. Performing Jumu`ah Prayers have great benefits including the gathering of villagers in one Masjid and being reminded every week of the Allah's Sacred Shari`ah (Law) in the two-part Khutbah of Jumu'ah. It is thus evident for every unbiased person from the indications cited that

the opinion of Jumhur is the most accurate, valid, and more reliable than that of those who oppose it. It is also more helpful for Muslims in the affairs of both Din and daily life. Moreover, it is closer to discharging the responsibility and the good of the Ummah (community of believers). As for what has been attributed to 'Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) is Mawquf (words or deeds narrated from a Companion of the Prophet that are not traced back to the Prophet or a Hadith narrated from a Companion of the Prophet)) from him and is not traced back as Hadith Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration) according to the statement of some scholars like Al-Nawawi (may Allah be merciful with him), even though the validity of relying on this Hadith as Mawquf is still debatable because its Sanad (chain of narrators) reported by `Abdul-Razzaq includes Al-Thawri (may Allah be merciful with him) who did not claim his hearing it and he is described as a Mudallis (a Hadith narrator who provides misleading information about his shaykh or the chain of narration) and includes Jabir Al-Ja'fi and Al-Harith Al-'Awar, who are both Da`if (weak).

The chain of narrators of this Hadith according to Ibn Shaybah includes Al-'Amash, who did not declare hearing from other narrators and is a well-known Mudallis. However, his narration and also that of Al-Thawri are authentic when reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim (may Allah be pleased with

them). However, as for their narrations reported outside the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim), they may be Ma`lul (a Hadith that appears to be sound, but thorough research reveals a disparaging factor in the chain of narrators or the text) when they did not declare hearing it.

These are my findings after research and investigation. I ask Allah to grant me, both of you, and all fellow Muslims all over the world to guide us to opt for and act according to Al-Haqq (the Truth) and safeguard us from fanaticism and partiality in all our affairs; He is the Waliy (Protector, supporter) and the most Able to do so.

As-salamu `alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

(Part No. 12; Page No. 363)

The Ruling on performing Zhuhr prayer after Friday prayer

Q. The inhabitants of a big town, where about thirty five Masjids exist, pray Zhuhr prayer after finishing Jumu'ah Prayer. Is it permissible or not?

A. It is Ma`lum min ad-din biddarurah (well-established religious matter) and the Islamic legal evidence also prove that Allah (Glorified be He) did not ordain any other obligatory Prayer during the noon time to be carried out by resident free Mukallafin (persons meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) and male persons except Jumu'ah prayer. If Muslims perform Jumu'ah Prayer, they are not required to perform neither Zhuhr nor any other obligatory Prayer, since Jumu'ah is the obligatory Prayer of this time. Neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with him) or Salaf (righteous predecessors) used to pray any other obligatory Prayer after Jumu'ah Prayer. This innovated deed, which is referred to, only took place many centuries after the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions and our Salf. There is no doubt that it is one of the newly introduced Bid`ah (innovation in religion) on which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Beware of newly-introduced matters (in religion), for every newly-introduced matter is a Bid'ah and every Bid'ah is a Dalalah (deviation from what is right).")

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He (peace be upon him) also said: ("Anyone who introduces anything into this matter of ours (Islam) that which is not part of it will have it rejected.") Related by Bukhari and Muslim. There is no doubt that performing Zhuhr Prayer immediately after Jumu'ah Prayer is something newly introduced and is not in accordance to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did. That is why it is rejected and could be classified as Bid'ah and Dalalah, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) warned us against. Some scholars drew the attention of us to such matters. For example, shaykh Jamal Al-Din Al-Qasimy in his book Islah al-Masajid min al-bida` wal-`waid (Clearing Masjids from Bida` (pl. of Bid'ah) and unprescribed habits) and the prominent shaykh Muhammad Ahmad `Abdul-Salam in his book Al-Sunan wal-Mubtata`ad (Acts of Sunnah and Innovations in religion). If someone said it cautiously and for fear that Jumu'ah in this form may turn invalid, the reply would be that the original rule is the validity of Jumau'ah Prayer and the absence of the obligation of Zhuhr Prayer. It is not permissible to pray Zhuhr at the time of Jumu'ah for those on whom Jumu'ah is obligatory. Precaution is only permissible when the Sunnah is not well-known and doubt exists. There is no room for doubt in this case but we know for sure according to clear evidence that the obligatory prayer is Jumu'ah only and nothing may be performed instead of it or be gathered with it to be taken as precaution against invalidity. It is also not permissible to introduce a new law against Allah's Purified Shar` (Law). Zhuhr Prayer in the time or after the time of Jumu'ah prayer opposes the legal evidence that is Ma`lum minad-din biddarurah, so great care should be taken not to perform it and warn against doing so. This deed is not supported by any legal evidence. It is from the insinuations of Satan to turn people away from guidance and act a new law for them

contradictory to the law of Allah. An example of this is those people whom Satan makes very fastidious about Ablution to the extent that they are unable to finish it; no sooner do they finish than Satan fills them with doubts that ablution is not valid and they did not do so and so. The same also happens with Salah; no sooner does a person start his prayer than Satan insinuates to him that he did not say Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer). Satan keeps insinuating to him in this manner till the first Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) is finished or the reading or most of it. These insinuations are satanic. They unveil the satanic determination invalidate acts of worship of Muslims and confuse them about their religious practices. We ask Allah salvation for us and for all Muslims of Satan's scheming and insinuations. He (Glorified be He) is the All-Hearer and Near (to all by His Knowledge).

To sum up: Performing Zhuhr Prayer after performing Jumu'ah Prayer is Bid'ah (innovation in religion) and Dalalah. It is an introduced act, which Allah does not allow. It is obligatory to abandon and take great care not to do it. It is obligatory to warn people against it and pray Jumu'ah only in accordance to what the Prophet (peace be upon him), his Companions and Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet) and those who followed them till our times did. Their action is the right undoubted practice. Imam Malik ibn Anas (may Allah be merciful with him) said: (The late generations of this nation will never prosper or have reform unless they adopt the same way of the early generation.) This fact was also repeated by Imams before and after him. May Allah grant us success!

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the reverend brother shaykh 'A.J. May Allah guide him to what pleases Him (Glorified be He) and make him an advocates of truth, amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have received your message, which certifies that a group of the people of Tanzania who follow the Madh-hab (School of Jurisprudence) of Imam Al-Shafi`y (may Allah be merciful with him) differed from their brothers in establishing Zhuhr Prayer after Jumu'ah. You also would like that I issue a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) concerning this case. Accordingly, I have examined the message well and reviewed the legal evidence and the opinions of scholars in this regard, which revealed the following: :

There no doubt that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), all praise and grace be to Him, has perfected the religion to this Ummah and completed His favor through the practices of His Messenger, the most beloved creature and close friend Muhammad ibn `Abdullah (peace be upon him). May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him, his family, and Companions. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islâm as your religion.﴿

During the period of ten years when The Prophet (peace be upon him) stayed in Madinah, he used to pray Jumu`ah Prayer with his Sahabah in his Masjid and the rest of the Muslim population of

Madinah used also to pray with him without establishing another Jumu'ah Prayer. The Rightly-Guided Caliphs followed the straight example of the Prophet and established only one Jumu'ah. When the number of Muslims increased and scattered all over the Arabian Peninsula and other places outside it, there raised the urgent necessity of the multitude of Jumu'ah Prayer in large and capital cities. Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars) were of the opinion that no harm of doing so when it is necessary. Other scholars were of the opinion that it is absolutely permissible to pray Jumu`ah in numerous Masjids. The right opinion is that of Jumhur, because establishing one congregational Jumu'ah prayer helps in uniting all Muslims together. If there is any necessity for praying Jumu`ah in several Masjid such as when the Masjid of the town or city does not have room for all people, the city is extremely large, or when there is an antagonism amongst the inhabitants whose congregation could result in Fitnah (sedition); in these cases and the like, the praying Jumu'ah Prayer in several Masjid during the same time is permissible, because the ruling of everything revolves around the presences or absences of its cause

Whenever the multitude of Jumu'ah Prayer is legally permissible, all different congregations of Jumu'ah Prayer is valid without establishing Zhuhr Prayer in any place after it, because this will enact a sixth obligatory Prayer, which is opposite to Allah's Shari`ah. Moreover, this prayer is against all Nusus (Islamic texts from the Qur'an or the Sunnah) and Ijma` (consensus of scholars) and is one of the newly introduced Bid'ah.

The best centuries of the Islamic nation and so many other centuries have passed during which Muslims did not know nothing about this newly introduced prayer. It is newly introduced by some late Al-Shafi`iyyah and some Al-Hanafiyyah depending on some doubtful matters that could not stand strong as legal evidence of this Bid'ah,

because when examined, it proves to be groundless and gives no reasonable grounds for performing this Bid'ah. This Bid'ah was resisted when

it was first introduced by a very large number of Al-Shafi`iyyah jurists and others. They stated that it was obligatory upon all Muslim scholars to resist and warn people against it. It is also obligatory on

those who introduced or approved of it to review themselves and be back to the right camp, since it is a must to be back to the right camp as it is better than committing more mistakes. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("Anyone who introduces anything into this matter of ours (Islam) that is not part of it will have it rejected.") Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from the Hadith of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). It is also related by Muslim in his Sahih in the following words: ("Anyone who does an action, which is not in accordance with this matter of ours (Islam), will have it rejected.") It is also related by Muslim on the authority of Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to introduce his Khutbah (sermon) of Jumu'ah with: ("Ama Ba'd (To proceed!), the best of speech is the Book of Allah, the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the most evil of matters are those which are newly-introduced (in religion), and every Bid'ah is a Dalalah (deviation from what is right).")

It is also reported in Al-Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) as a Hadith Hasan (a Hadith whose chain of narration contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish) on the authority of Al-`Irbad ibn Sariyah (may Allah be pleased with him): (The Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered us an extremely eloquent sermon, which made our hearts afraid and made us weep. We said: "O Messenger of Allah, you speak like a person saying farewell! Please, give us advice!" He replied "I advice you along with myself to fear Allah and to absolutely obey your leaders even if your leader is a slave, because those who will stay alive from you after my death will see great diversity in practices; in that case, you have to stick to my Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs following me.

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Cling to it so tenaciously (with your molar teeth)! Beware of newly-introduced matters (in religion), for every newly-introduced matter is a Bid'ah and every Bid'ah is a Dalalah (deviation from what is right)) .

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says in His Glorious Book disparaging the mongers of Bida' and warning people against following their course: (Or have they partners (with Allâh — false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not ordained?)

There are many well-known Ayat (Qur'anic verses) and Ahadith, which disparage and warn against Bida'. I wish I could have mentioned what is sufficiently convincing for any person who seeks the truth.

I ask Allah((Glorified and Exalted be He) to fix the affairs of all Muslims and unite them around the true principles of Islam whenever they are. May He grant you Barakah (divine abundance) in business and reward you for your concern of the affairs of your brothers and your care to reunite them and resist this Bid'ah! I ask Him to reward you and make me along with you tolerant brothers and advocates of guidance and supporters of truth. He (Glorified be He) is the All-Hearer and Near (to all by His Knowledge).

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

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Ruling on translating the Khutbah of Jumu`ah Prayer to the language of the listeners

Q: Is it permissible to translate the Jumu`ah (Friday) Khutbah (sermon) to non-Arab people so that they can understand it?

A: Yes, of course it is permissible to do so. The Khatib (preacher) is permitted to deliver his sermon in Arabic and to translate it in the language which the listeners understand because the main objective of the sermon is to preach to the people who are listening, admonish and teach them the rules of Shari`ah (Islamic law), and this could never happen unless the sermon is translated. May Allah grant us success! May He guide us to useful knowledge and to act upon it, and to guide us all to Al-Sirat-ul-Mustaqim (the Straight Path), He is the All Generous, the All Bountiful!

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

President of the Islamic University in Madinah

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Ruling on translating the Jumu'ah sermon

From `Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the honored brother, may Allah save him!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.) To proceed:

I have received your message, may Allah best guide you, and understood its content regarding the correspondence of some literate persons of the city of Katan Kady, south of Ceylon Island to your Excellence that the population of this city, which is about 200,000, disagree about the permissibility of translating the Jumu'ah sermon into their native language, and so on. I also inferred your wish to explain the right opinion in this issue according to the rules of our purified Shar` (Law) and the fulfilling the desire of those who listen to the Jumu`ah. Accordingly, for the sake of answering your question, satisfying your wish, contributing in reconciliation among Muslims and settlement of their differences, and trying to spread the Islamic teachings and the Prophetic instructions through the Arabic language as well as other languages, I will give you my opinion as I know it from our Purified Shar' in this

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regard:

All praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his

Companions, and those who follow his guidance. Scholars (may Allah be merciful with them) have disagreed concerning the translation of the Jumu'ah Khutbah and that of two 'Eids into foreign languages (languages other than Arabic). A group of scholars are of the opinion that it is not permissible to do so wishing, may Allah be pleased with them, to preserve the Arabic language and protect it and following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) in preaching their Khutbah in Arabic even in non-Arabic countries. This is meant to encourage their peoples to learn Arabic and be interested in it.

Other scholars were of the view that it is permissible to translate the Jumu`ah Khutbah into languages other than Arabic if the largest number of listeners do not know Arabic. These scholars depended on the purpose for which Allah's purified Shar` (Law) obligate the Khutbah, that is, making people understand the rulings of Allah's purified Shar` in order to follow those rules and to stop people from committing sins, and to guide them to good morals and good manners and warning them against bad manners. There is no doubt that paying attention to the aims and purposes of something is more important than paying attention to words and literal meaning especially when the listeners or most of them are not interested in Arabic or if Arabic Khutbah will not urge them to study and be interested in it.

In this way, the objective of preserving Arabic will not be realized nor it will be safeguarded

and that is why it becomes clear that the opinion which adopts the permissibility of translating the Jumu'ah Khutbah into the language of the listeners who completely understand it, is the preferable one and the best to be followed. This is especially so if the absence of translation will lead to dispute and hostility. There is no doubt that translating the Khutbah in this case is necessary to obtain the benefit and block the means that lead to sins. If there are some listeners who know Arabic, the Khatib (preacher) should deliver his sermon in both Arabic and the other language. He could start his Khutbah using Arabic and translate what he had said in Arabic into the language of the listeners. This is how to fulfill the benefits of both sides and get rid of all forms of harm and settle any conflict.

There is a lot of proofs from the purified Shar' in this regard, the first of which is what has just been mentioned that the aim of the Khutbah is to fulfill the benefit of the listeners and admonish them regarding the rights of Allah (Exalted be He) and warning them against what He forbids. This could never happen unless they are addressed through their native tongue. The other evidence is that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has sent His messengers speaking the languages of their peoples to allow mutual understanding of His revelation in the language they know. He (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them.﴿ And: ﴾(This is) a Book which We have revealed unto you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم) in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allâh and Islâmic Monotheism) by their Lord's Leave to the Path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all Praise.﴿

How could mankind be led out of darkness (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allah and Islamic Monotheism) if they do not know its meaning or understand what Allah (Exalted be He) wants. It is known that translation has become a must to explain the meaning of the right of Allah (Exalted be He) if they do not have the chance to learn the language of the Qur'an and be interested in it. Further evidence is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded Zayd ibn Thabit to learn the language of the Jews for the purposes of correspondence and to refute their pretexts, and to read their messages to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and explain them. Moreover, when the Sahabah (may Allah be please with them) conquered non-Arabic countries like

Persia and the Romans, they did not engage in war with them until they had called them to Islam through translators. When they conquered those non-Arab countries they called people to the religion of Allah (Exalted be He) through the Arabic language and ordered them to learn it. Those who were unable to read or speak Arabic, the Muslims called them through their own native languages and explained the meaning to them, and that is how they refuted their pretexts and stopped their excuses. There is no doubt that this approach has become necessary especially in times like ours when Islam has become alienated and every country sticks to its native language. Translation has become a must in this case because any Da`y (caller to Islam) will not succeed in his Da`wah (calling to Islam) except through doing so.

May Allah grant all Muslims success whenever they are! I also ask Allah (Exalted be He) to grant them full understanding of their religion and firm adherence to its Shari`ah (Islamic law), keep them steadfast on it, set right the affairs of Muslim rulers,

make His religion (Islam) victorious and destroy His enemies! He is All-Generous, All-Bountiful.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions and those who follow his guidance!

General Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

Permanent residence is a condition for the validity of Jumu`ah Prayer

From `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz to the respected brother and Shaykh, may Allah increase him in knowledge and Iman (faith) and may He bless him wherever he may be! Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) To continue:

I received your letter dated 14/2/1388 A.H. may you receive true guidance from Allah. May Allah make us and you among those who are constantly mindful and fearful of Him! It is our pleasure to know that you and your colleagues are in good health. We would like to inform you that by the grace of Allah, I and all the shaykhs and brothers at the Islamic University in Madinah are enjoying good health. May Allah guide all Muslims to give thanks to Allah for the blessings He bestows upon them and may He grant us steadfastness upon His Din (religion) until we meet with Him (Glorified and Exalted be He). Allah is the best One to ask. **As for your question about offering the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer in foreign countries,**

the answer is: Scholars have agreed that in such circumstances of yours, you are not required to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer and it is even more doubted whether it will be valid if offered. You are required to offer the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer instead. The reason is that you are as travelers and unsettled Bedouins. The Jumu`ah Prayer is only incumbent upon settled residents. This is based on the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not command those who went on journeys or the Bedouins to offer it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself did not offer the Jumu`ah Prayer whenever he went on a journey. The same practice was adopted by his Sahabah (Companions) (may

Allah be pleased with them). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him), in the year of the Farewell Hajj, offered the Zhuhr Prayer while standing on mount `Arafah on Friday. He did not offer the Jumu`ah Prayer nor did he order the pilgrims to offer it as they were treated like travelers. I do not know of any disagreement among scholars over this issue. Though some Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet) are known to have disagreed over this issue, their disagreement is not considered.

However, If you ever find out that other permanent Muslim residents live with you who offer the Jumu`ah Prayer, it will be incumbent on you and others whose stay in foreign countries is temporary for the purpose of seeking knowledge or conducting business to offer the Jumu`ah with them in order to gain the reward.

A group of scholars are of the view that Jumu`ah Prayer is obligatory upon the traveler who will stay in a place for a period in which he is not permitted to shorten Salah and where Jumu'ah Prayer is offered. They derived this ruling by analogy to the resident person.

As for the books you asked for, we will send them to you together with copies of other lectures. We ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) that these books will benefit you and all the Muslim brothers there.

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We also hope that you confirm receipt of these books and this message. We ask Allah to increase us all in beneficial knowledge and good deeds, to grant us all good understanding of His Din (religion) and to make us all advocates of right guidance and supporters of the truth. Allah is the Most Generous, the Ever-Bounteous.

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His Eminence general president of Administrations of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Da`wah and Guidance.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

Q: We would like to inform Your Eminence that we are a group of soldiers and civilians who work for civil defense. We came from Riyadh and other areas to serve the pilgrims during the two months of Dhul-Qi`dah and Dhul-Hijjah. We offer Salah at a special Masjid (mosque) during this period.

Is it permissible for us to hold the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer at that Masjid or do we have to offer it as Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Wa `Alaykum As-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh . To continue:

You have to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer at the Masjids where the Jumu`ah is offered if this is possible. Unless you are able to, then you may offer the Zhuhr Prayer instead as you are not considered as permanent residents of the area. Permanent residence is a condition for the validity of

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the Jumu`ah Prayer.

May Allah guide all Muslims to that which pleases Him. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

General President of Administration of Scholarly Research,

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It is not necessary that the Khatib (preacher) be the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer).

Q. I have just read an opinion in Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) according to the four Madh-hab (School of Jurisprudence) of Al-Malikiyah concerning the conditions of validity of Jumu'ah Prayer (Friday); one of these conditions is that the Imam and Khatib must be one and the same person who delivers the Khutbah. If the person who delivered the Khutbah is not the Imam, the Jumu'ah Prayer would be invalid unless there has been an urgent impediment which made the Imam unable to complete his role. I did not find any reference to this condition in Al-Shafi`iyyah since I myself saw some people where someone delivers the Khutbah (sermon) and another person leads the people in Jumu'ah Prayer. What is the ruling on this practice and what is the ruling on my Prayer if I were a follower of the Malikyy school of Jurisprudence?

A. This is a disputable issue among jurists. The accurate opinion is that it is not necessary for the Khatib to be the Imam because the Khutbah has a separate identity from the Prayer.

The best opinion is that the person who delivers the Khutbah should be the person who leads the people in Prayer and likewise in Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer). This is similar to the practices of both the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them all). But if it were not possible for the Khatib to be able to

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lead the people in Prayer due to the existence of any impediment which prevents him from Prayer, then, the Prayer is valid. Also, there would be no harm if he led the people in Prayer and if he left another person to deliver the khutbah instead of him. May Allah grant us success!

Q: A borther from Benghazi, Libya asks: "Is it permissible for the Khutbah (sermon) to be delivered by someone while someone else leads the congregation of Muslims in Salah (Prayer)? May Allah reward you well!

A: The Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars) have held the view that it is not a condition that one who delivers the Friday Khutbah be the same one who leads the congregation of Muslims in Salah as there is no evidence to support this. Some other scholars have stipulated that the Khatib (preacher) has to be the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer).

However, the most correct view is that there is nothing wrong with doing so when necessary. Allah alone grants success.

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Q: In some places, people allow a young man to deliver the Friday Khutbah (sermon) while someone else leads them in Salah (Prayer). What is the ruling on this regarding?

A: There is nothing wrong if the Khatib (preacher) is better at delivering the Khutbah (sermon) than the one who leads them in Salah as long as he is chosen by authorities in charge. It is not necessary that the Khatib and Imam be one and the same person since Salah is independant from the Khutbah. However, it is preferable that one who delivers the Khutbah leads the people in Salah. Authorities in charge have to select someone who is eligible for that purpose in order to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and whosoever followed them in righteousness. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Is it permissible that someone delivers the Friday Khutbah (sermon) while someone else leads the congregation of Muslims in Salah when the Imam is not present?

A: If the Imam is absent or present in the town where

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the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer is offered, but people find it difficult to reach him due to living in a distant place or because of rain, there will be no harm if one of the attendants at the Masjid (mosque) delivers the Khutbah (sermon) while someone else leads the people in Salah. This is conditional upon their being qualified to do that. It is pointless to keep people waiting for such a long time in the Masjid waiting for the Imam to show up. This may put them under hardship. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Facilitate things for people and do not make them hard on them﴿ It was also authentically reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned from a journey at an unusual time, his Sahabah (Companions) asked `Abdul-Rahman ibn `Awf to lead them in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, an act which was approved of by the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the Prophet (peace be upon him) went out to make peace between Banu `Amr ibn `Awf he was delayed and the time of the Salah (Prayer) was due. Bilal asked Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with them both) to lead Muslims in Salah. Bilal announced the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) and Abu Bakr came forward and started Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came walking through the rows until he stood in the first row. Upon seeing him, the Sahabah started clapping their hands. Abu Bakr did not normally turn round in his Salah. When the people increased their clapping, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him)

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looked around and saw the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) indicated to him to continue praying. Abu Bakr did not do so out of politeness in dealing with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and stepped backwards until he was standing in the row and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) went forward and led the people in Salah.When he finished Salah, he forbade people from clapping. He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When something happens to you in Salah, men should say: 'Glory be to Allah! (Subhanallah),' and women should clap.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

May Allah grant us, you and all Muslims good understanding of His Din (religion)!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Deputy of the head of the Islamic University at Madinah

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Q: During Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, someone announced the first Adhan (call to Prayer), another one announced the second Adhan, a third one delivered the Khutbah (sermon) and a fourth one led the people in Salah (Prayer). What is the ruling on this regard?

A: There is nothing wrong with someone announcing the first Adhan (call to Prayer), another one announcing the second Adhan, a third one delivering the Khutbah (sermon) and a fourth one leading the people in Salah. However, it is preferable that the person who delivers the Khutbah leads people in Salah if that is possible. This was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Rightly-Guided Caliphs.

There is no Sunnah Qabliyyah before Jumu'ah

Q: A brother from Algeria asks: "Is there Sunnah Ba`diyyah/Qabliyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed after/before an obligatory Prayer) performed on a regular basis before or after Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer?

A: There is no Sunnah Qabliyyah before Jumu'ah Prayer according to what is sound of the two opinions held by scholars, but it is prescribed for the Muslim, when he comes to the Masjid (mosque), to pray whatever Allah enables him to pray, saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after each two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer). This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him)

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said: (The (optional) Salah by night and day should consist of pairs of Rak`ahs.) Narrated by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with a good Isnad (chain of narrators); the original is to be found in the Sahih without any mention of the day.)

Many Sahih (authentic) reports indicate that what is prescribed for the Muslim when they enter the Masjid (mosque) on Friday is to offer as many Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) as they wish before the Imam ascends the Minbar (pulpit). The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not specify whether it should be two, four or more. All of that is good, but the minimum is two Rak'ahs which is known as Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque). With regard to offering Salah after Jumu`ah, there is Sunnah Ba`diyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed after an obligatory Prayer) performed on a regular basis, the minimum of which is two Rak'ahs and the maximum is four. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: (When anyone amongst you observes Salah after Jumu'ah, he should observe four Rak`ahs.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer two Rak`ahs after Jumu`ah in his house. May Allah help us all to do what pleases Him!

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Ruling on offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid during the Friday Khutbah

Q: There has been a discussion between me and some of our Muslim brothers who used to perform Salah (Prayer) in the Masjid (mosque) of Fitna Refee Marw in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan about observing the two Rak`ahs (unit of Prayer) of Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) while the Imam is delivering his Khutbah (sermon). I hope your Eminence will explain this issue for us, and show whether is it permissible to do so or not. Please take into consideration that those who pray in this ancient Masjid follow the school of jurisprudence of Imam Malik (Malikiyyah).

A: It is a Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) for whoever enters a Masjid to perform two Rak`ahs of Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid even if the Imam is delivering the Khutbah according to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When anyone among you enters the Masjid, he should not sit till he has observed two Rak`ahs.﴿ It was related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim). .

Also, Muslim related in his Sahih from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that

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the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When any one of you comes on Friday while the Imam is delivering the sermon, he should observe two Rak`ahs and should make them short.﴿ .

This is an explicit Nas (Islamic text from the Qur'an or the Sunnah) regarding the ruling on the issue and it is not permissible for anyone to oppose it. It may be that Imam Malik (may Allah be merciful with him) was not informed about this Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), that it was authentically proven that he was of the opinion that it is not permissible to observe those two Rak`ahs at the time of the Khutbah. If this Sunnah is authentically proven about the Prophet (peace be upon him), no one is permitted to oppose it according to what Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.﴿ He (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge).﴿

It is well-known that the commandment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is directly taken from the Commandments of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) according to what He says: ﴾He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), has indeed obeyed Allâh﴿ May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on offering two Rak`ahs after the first Adhan on Friday

Q: A brother from Riyadh says: "I notice some people at Al-Haramayn Al-Sharifayn (the Two Sacred Mosques: the Sacred Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) offering two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) right after the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) finishes announcement of the first Adhan (call to Prayer) on Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer. Kindly clarify the truth regarding this matter. May Allah prolong your life and help you remain steadfast on His obedience!

A: I know of no legal evidence indicating the desirability of offering these two Rak`ahs. This is because the first Adhan was introduced by `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) during his caliphate as a result of the increasing number of Muslims in Madinah. This Adhan was intended to remind Muslims of Friday. The practice was adopted by the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) including `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him). The practice came to be an established Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾You must follow my Sunnah and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Stick to them and hold fast to them.﴿

Some scholars have made it permissible to offer these two Rak`ahs after the first Adhan is announced. This is based on the general meaning implied in the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾One may offer Salah (Prayer)

in the period between each two Adhans, one may offer Salah in the period between each two Adhans. Repeating it for the third time the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'for whoever wills.'﴿

I am inclined to the view that the above mentioned Adhan is not included in the two Adhans to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) referred. These two Adhans refer to the Adhan announced before each obligatory Salah and Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) excluding Jumu`ah Prayer. The congregation of Muslims have to get prepared to listen to the Khutbah (sermon) delivered on Friday right after the Adhan is announced. Allah alone grants success.

Time of Jumu`ah Prayer

Q: Is it permissible to offer the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer before noontime?

A: It is permissible to offer it before noontime. However, it is preferable to offer it after noontime in order to avoid the disagreement held by scholars over this issue. The majority of scholars state that the Jumu`ah Prayer has to be offered after noontime. Some other scholars have made it permissible to offer the Jumu`ah Prayer before noontime as there are many authentic Hadiths narrated to that effect.

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If one offers it a short time before noontime, it will be valid. However, one should offer it after noontime. It is preferable to do this in order to be in line with all Hadiths narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard and in order to make it easy for Muslims to go to Masjid (mosque) all at the same time. This is the preponderant opinion.

Reciting the Qur'an loudly at the Masjid

Q: Is it permissible to recite the Qur'an in a loud voice inside the Masjid (mosque)?

A: It is not permissible for a Muslim to recite the Qur'an in a loud voice inside the Masjid or any other place if such a loud recitation might cause those those performing Salah (Prayer) or reciting the Qur'an to get distracted. It is an act of Sunnah (commendable) to recite the Qur'an in a low voice that does not disturb others. (It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard some people raising their voices above one another. He went out to them and said:

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'O people! Each one of you is conversing with Allah. Therefore, let none of you disturb one another or raise their voices above one another.')

Reciting the two Surahs of Al-Sajdah (Surah Number 32) and Al-Insan (Surah number 76) in the Fajr Prayer of Friday is an act of Sunnah

Q: Some Ma'mums (those being led by an Imam in Prayer) get bored when the Imam recites the two Surahs of Al-Sajdah and Al-Insan in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayers on Friday because they are long Surahs. What should the Imam do, given the fact that most of the Ma'mums want the Imam to recite these two Surahs while others do not?

A: Reciting these two Surahs was a regular practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is commendable for the Imam to recite these two Surahs in the Fajr Prayer on Friday even if some people may detest that out of laziness. The practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should be given priority over all other things. The Imams have to observe and give concern to the practices of the Prophet in all Prayers. This is based on the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) which reads: ﴿Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow﴾

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The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ("He who turns away from my Sunnah does not belong to me".)

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To His Eminence, the renowned Imam, jurist, Qur'an exegete, preacher, mufty and grand Shaykh of Islam `Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz, **may Allah prolong your life to serve Islam and Muslims!**

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

Some Ma'mums (those being led by an Imam in Prayer) object to the Imam's recitation of the two Surahs of Al-Sajdah and Al-Insan while offering the Fajr Prayer on Friday. They want the Imam to recite only Surah Al-Sajdah in the two Rak`ahs of the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer on the pretext that some old Muslims can not stand for such a long time. They argue that some Imams at other Masjids (mosques) recite only Surah Al-Sajdah in the two Rak`ahs of the Fajr Prayer. What is the best course of action that we should follow in that regard? Please, advise! May Allah reward you!

A: Wa `alaykum as-salamu warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you too!)

It is an act of Sunnah (regular practice of the Prophet) to recite the two Surahs of Al-sajdah and Al-Insan in the first and the second Rak`ahs (units of prayer) in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer offered on Friday. One should pay no attention to those who object to that.

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The reason is that this was the regular practice of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). The Messenger of Allah is the most merciful human being to mankind. Who could be more kind to the weak Muslims than he was? There is no harm if one does not recite these two Surahs once or twice a month in order to stress the fact that it is not obligatory to recite them and that it is permissible to recite other Surahs of the Qur'an. May Allah guide all Muslims to that which pleases Him!

Grand Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

`Abdul `Aziz bin `Abdullah ibn Baz

Ruling on reciting only one of the two Surahs of Al-Sajidah (Surah Number 32) and Al-Insan (Surah number 76) in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer every Friday

Q: Is it permissible to recite only one of the two Surahs of Al-Sajdah and Al-Insan in the Fajr Prayer every Friday?

A: It is Sunnah (commendable act) to recite the two Surahs in both Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) in the Fajr Prayer. This is based on the Hadith in which the prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴿Pray in the same manner you have seen me praying.﴾ This is also based on the general meaning of the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) which reads: ﴿Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow﴾ This practice also helps the revival of and adherence to Sunnah (whatever reported from the Prophet). May Allah grant us success!

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Reciting Surah Al-Sajdah

and making Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer offered on Friday

Q: Is it an act of Sunnah (commendable) to recite Surah Al-Sajdah and make Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) in the Fajr Prayer every Friday? If it is an act of Sunnah, should one observe it regularly?

A: It is Sunnah (commendable act) that, on Friday, the Imam recites Surah Al-Sajdah in the first Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) of the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and make Sujud-ul-Tilawah. It is also Sunnah to recite Surah Al-Insan which starts with: ﴾Has there not been over man a period of time﴿ This is based on the Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him). A similar Hadith was also narrated by Muslim on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both). A third similar Hadith was narrated by Al-Tabarany on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) where Ibn Mas`ud gives the following addition: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite these two Surahs regularly". Thus, it is Sunnah to observe reciting them regularly.

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Q: What is the ruling on someone who recites Surah Al-Sajdah in the two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer offered on Friday?

A: If they do so, they will not be practicing the Sunnah (commendable act). They should be directed to do what is Sunnah, but the Salah (Prayer) is valid. There is nothing wrong with reciting other Surahs occasionally with the purpose of teaching others that it is not obligatory to recite these particular Surahs every Friday. May Allah grant us success!

Children sitting

in the first row at the time of the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer

Q: Some children go to Masjid (mosque) early on Friday. When old people come to the Masjid, they ask them to retreat to the back rows so that they can sit in their places. They base their action on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ("Let those (standing) near to me of you (in congregational prayer) be the mature and the wise.") **Is that permissible?**

A: Some scholars have held the view that young boys should sit in the rear rows. However, this is a debatable view.

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The most preferable view is that once the boys seat themselves in the first or the second row, it will not be permissible for old people who go to the Masjid late to ask them to withdraw to the back rows. They have better claim to remain seated in their places as they went earlier. This is based on the general meaning implied in the Hadiths narrated in this regard. Another reason is that asking them to withdraw to the back rows discourages them from hastening to offer Salah at the Masjid. Therefore, it is improper to ask them to retreat to the back rows.

However, if people including men, young boys, and women happen to gather together at one time, then it is preferable that men take the first row. The young boys may sit right behind them while women should seat themselves in the last row.

As for the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ("Let those (standing) near to me of you (in congregational prayer) be the mature and the wise,") it aims at encouraging wise and mature Muslims to hasten to join the first row. This does not necessarily mean that they have to ask those in the front rows to retreat to the rear rows so that they can take their places. This is contrary to the proofs of Shari`ah (Islamic Law) mentioned above.

The time when one's Du`a' is most likely to be answered on Friday

Q: When should the Muslims supplicate earnestly on Friday to have their Du`a' (supplication) answered? Should they supplicate at any time on Friday, at `Asr (Afternoon) time, or right after the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer?

A: Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has favored Friday with a specific time at which Du`a' (supplication) is answered. This time is very short and no Muslim would supplicate to Allah while standing up in Salah (Prayer) except that they will be granted whatever they are supplicating for. This very short space of time is of great blessings. According to some Hadiths narrated by Muslim, this time starts when the Imam sits on the Minbar (pulpit) on Friday and continues until the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer is over. This has been reported in the Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith) of Muslim on the authority of Abu Musa in a Hadith Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration). Some scholars said that these words are attributed to Abu Burdah ibn Abu Musa and were not uttered by the Prophet (peace be upon him). The correct view is that these words are traced back to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In another Hadith

narrated by Jabir ibn `Abdullah and `Abdullah ibn Salam, this time starts from `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and continues until sunset. According to some other Hadiths, this time starts shortly before the dawn of the following day break. All these views are correct and are not incongruous with one another.

However, Du`a' made on Friday is most likely answered at the time when the Imam sits on the Minbar and until the Jumu`ah Prayer is over. The period between the `Asr and Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer is also a time when the Du`a' is most likely answered. Du`a' may also be answered at any other time on Friday. This is based on the general meaning of the Hadiths narrated in this regard. Therefore, the Muslims should preoccupy themselves with making repeated Du`a's on Friday in the hope that their Du`a' may coincide with that blessed time. More attention should be given to the three times mentioned above as the Prophet (peace be upon him) stressed the fact that Du`a' is answered at a specific time on Friday. May Allah grant us success!

Q: Does the specific time when Allah answers Du`a' (supplication) on Friday occur shortly before sunset? Should the Muslim be in the Masjid at this time and do women have to be at home?

A: There are two opinions regarding the exact time when Allah answers Du`a' on Friday:

First: It starts from `Asr time until the sun sets, for those who sit and wait for Maghrib, whether it is in the Masjid or at home, making Du`a' to their Lord, whether they are men or women; whoever does that is more deserving to have the Du`a' answered. But men should not pray Maghrib or any other prayer at home unless they have a legitimate Shar`y excuse, as is well known from the evidence of Shari`ah.

Second: It starts from the time when the Imam sits on the Minbar (pulpit) to deliver the khutbah on Friday until he finishes the prayer. Du'a' at either of these times is worthy to be answered. These are the two most likely times when the Du`a' is answered on Friday. This is based on the authentic Hadiths indicating that Du`a' is most likely answered at these two times. Du`a' may also be answered at any other time on Friday. Allah's bounty is limitless (Glorified and Exalted be He).

The Du`a' may also be answered by Allah during the times when one is making Sujud (prostration) while offering an obligatory or supererogatory Salah (Prayer). This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴿The nearest a servant can be to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so supplicate a lot (in this posture).﴾ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih on the authority of Abu Hurayrah) Muslim (may Allah be merciful with him) also narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Glorify your Lord in Ruku` (bowing)

and exert yourself in supplication in prostration. Thus, your supplications are most likely to be accepted.﴾

Ghusl Ghusl (ritual bath) for Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer is an act of Sunnah when preparing for Friday Prayer

Q: Does the obligatory Ghusl taken before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer exempt one from performing Ghusl for Jumu'ah or not?

A: It is an act of Sunnah to perform Friday Ghusl when getting ready for Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer prior to going to the Masjid. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("When any of you goes to the Jumu'ah Prayer, he should perform Ghusl.")

It is sufficient for one to perform Friday Ghusl at the beginning of the day, because it

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is a stressed Sunnah. Some scholars hold the view that it is Wajib (obligatory); therefore, one should always perform Ghusl on Fridays. It is desirable to perform Friday Ghusl before going to the Masjid as it ensures that one is clean and eliminates unpleasant odors. It is preferable for males to wear fragrant oils and fine clothes. One should proceed to the Masjid in state of Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and walk slowly, for each step taken obliterates sins and raises one's status. Upon reaching the Masjid, one should enter with the right foot, invoke Allah to send peace and prayers upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), saying: "Bismillah (In the Name of Allah)" and "A'udhu billahil-'Azim, wa biwajhihi Al-Karim, wa sultanihi Al-Qadim min al-Shaitani al-Rajim, Allahumma iftah li abwaba rahmatik. (I take refuge in Allah the Supreme, in His Honorable Countenance and His Eternal Authority from the accursed Satan. Oh Lord! Open the gates of Your Mercy to me." One should offer Salah as much as is decreed and should not push to sit between two people. While waiting for the Imam to arrive, one should spend this time reciting the Qur'an, Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), or remain silent. While the Imam is delivering the Khutbah (sermon), one should listen attentively and then offer Friday Prayer behind him. Whoever does so will benefit greatly. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ("Whoever performs Ghusl, goes to the Masjid, prays that which is prescribed for him, keeps silent until the Imam concludes the Khutbah, and offers the Jumu`ah Prayer along with the Imam, will be forgiven for sins committed between then and the following Friday, and even three days beyond.") This is because a good deed is recorded as ten times its like.

Ghusl of Janabah (ritual bath following major ritual impurity) stands for the Ghusl of the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer if one intends them both

Q: Does Ghusl of Janabah suffice for Ghusl made before the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer?

A: If one performs Ghusl by day, they will not have to perform another Ghusl for the Jumu`ah Prayer. It is better that one makes the intention to perform both Ghusls. In this way, one will attain the reward for the Ghusl made on Friday.

Merits in going early to the Jumu`ah Prayer

Q: Is it permissible for people to reserve a place in the front rows of the Masjid in Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer while they are still in their houses?

A: It is not permissible to do so. The legal practice is that the person himself goes to

the Masjid and wait for Jumu'ah Prayer after performing whatever he likes of voluntary prayer, he then has to busy himself with reciting the Qur'an or with Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]") or Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]") or Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") or Tahlil (saying: "La ilaha illa Allah [There is no god except Allah]") or Du`a' (supplication) until the Imam ascends the Minbar (pulpit) and starts delivering Khutbah (sermon). What some people do of reserving a place in the front rows or inside the Masjid itself by leaving shoes or Bisht (cloaks for men) or any other thing, is not permissible because sitting in the Masjid is an advantage to whoever comes early and similar is the first row for congregational Salah (Prayer). Whoever comes early is worthier of sitting in the first rows. Reserving those rows by leaving shoes or other items, or a prayer rug is not permissible.

Passing in front of someone offering Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on a person who interrupts someone's prayer, or a person who passes in front of another performing voluntary prayer preceding Jumu`ah Prayer because of over crowdedness?

A: A person who comes into the Masjid is not permitted to interrupt those who are offering prayer; rather, he has to carefully find his own way around those who are offering prayer and not pass in front of them. If he is obliged to do so and has no other way to pass except through this passage, he is then allowed to pass. We hope that Allah will forgive him! However, he must earnestly seek the safest way to pass through. That is why it is not Haram (Prohibited) to pass in front of those who are offering prayer in Al-Masjid Al-Haram, because it is quite likely to be overcrowded, where one is mostly unable to prevent people from passing in front of

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those who are praying. If there is over crowdedness, due to which people are unable to find a clear way to reach the vacant rows during prayer, it is permissible to pass in front of them. We ask Allah to forgive him, since Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴿while He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you, except under compulsion of necessity﴾

That is why those who are praying should choose a suitable place where they will not do any harm to people due to over crowdedness. They should also limit themselves to praying two to four Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) after which they should sit down to let people pass freely.

Q: There are four or five year old children who usually accompany their fathers to attend Jumu`ah prayer, and when the Imam commences prayer, they neglect prayer, talk with each other and leave the Masjid, is this permissible?

A: It is obligatory on fathers not to bring their children, who are less than seven years old, along to Jumu`ah Prayer. Then, when they are seven years old and are more responsive to orders, they should be ordered to learn how to pray regularly. If those children are less than seven years of age or are less responsive in carrying out disciplinary instructions, they should not be brought to the Masjid since prayer is not obligatory on them and since their presence in the Masjid entails distraction

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to those who are praying, with those kids disturbing them.

Q: Does the passing of those young children in front of those offering prayer entail cutting off prayer of respective people?

A: There are only three causes which necessarily entail cutting off prayer: the passing of a mature female, a donkey, or a black dog. Only these three causes require a Muslim to cut off prayer if they pass between someone praying and his Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying), whether there be Sutrah in front of him or not. Yet, the person praying should as much as possible prevent anything other than those three to pass in front of him, like an adult male or a young boy or a beast,

since the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ⟪When any of you prays facing something which conceals him from people and anyone tries to pass in front of him, he (praying person) should push him away, but if he (passing person) refuses, he should be fight him away (from passing), for such is indeed a devil.⟫ Agreed upon (by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) as authentic, being reported from Abu Sa`id Al-Khudry (may Allah be pleased with him) If an adult male or a camel or a sheep passes in front of a praying person, this does not entail cutting off one's prayer. For, Prayer can only be cut off due to the passing of any of the three things mentioned in the authentically reported Ahadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Such things are the donkey, the black dog and the mature female.

The manner of shaking hands with other people during the Friday Khutbah (sermon)

Q: What is the ruling if one extends their hand to shake hands while the Imam is delivering the Friday Khutbah (sermon)?

A: You are permitted to wave your hand to them as a token of greeting and you may shake hands with them if they extend their hand to you. However, you should not talk to them. This is because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered his Sahabah (Companions) to listen attentively to the Khatib (preacher). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If you (even) ask your companion to be quiet on Friday while the Imam is delivering the sermon, you have in fact talked nonsense.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

In this Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) equated asking someone to be silent, which is naturally a good act, with idle talk. What would the case be then if one utters other words. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾One who distracts himself with pebbles during the Khutbah (sermon) will not get the (Jumu`ah, Friday Prayer) reward".﴿

The Mu'min (believer) has to listen attentively to the Khatib and avoid

tampering with pebbles or other things of the sort. If a person greets you with Salam (Islamic greeting of peace), you may wave your hand as a token of greeting them back. You may shake their hand if they happen to extend their hands to you, but without a single word spoken between you. It is recommended that, after the Khutbah (sermon) is finished, you tell them that such a practice should be avoided in the future and that if they enter the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is delivering the Khutbah, they will have to offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) and start to listen attentively to the Khutbah. If they sneeze, they may say Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah) subvocally.

The ruling on greeting others with Salam after offering the supererogatory Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on greeting others with Salam after offering the supererogatory Prayer?

A: It is permissible for Muslims who face each other in rows after offering Salah (Prayer) to greet each other with Salam (Islamic greeting of peace). They may also shake hands with each other. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾No two Muslims would shake hands with each other upon meeting except that they will have their sins forgiven before they leave one another."﴿ Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) used to shake hands with one another upon meeting and would embrace one another upon returning from a journey." It is authentically narrated that

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the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you will not enter Jannah (Paradise) until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I tell you something to do so that you love one another? Spread greetings of Salam among you.﴿ Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith).

﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked, "Which practice of Islam is the best?" He (peace be upon him) said, "Feed the people and spread greetings of Salam among those whom you know and those whom you do not know."﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). If a Muslim happens to come across a Kafir (disbeliever), they should not start greeting him with Salam. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾Do not be the first to say Salam to the Jews or Christians. ﴿ Narrated by Muslim.

Reciting the Qur'an in microphones before Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer

Q: In many countries of the Islamic world the Qur'an is recited in microphones at Masjids (mosques) before Jumu`ah Prayer. What is the ruling on that?

A: We know of no evidence in the Qur'an or Sunnah (whatever reported from the Prophet) or the Practice of the Sahabah or Salaf (righteous predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them all). The act described in the question falls under the category of prohibited Bid`ah (innovation in religion) that should be avoided. Besides, this act may cause the Muslims to be distracted while in Salah (Prayer) or while reciting the Qur'an.

Allah (may He be Praised) knows best. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

Q: Is it an act of Sunnah or Bid`ah to recite Tasbih (glorification of Allah) loudly before the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer is offered?

A: There is no doubt that this constitutes an act of Bid`ah (innovation in religion) since neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor any of his Sahabah (Companions) were reported to have done this. All aspects of good are attained by following their example. There is no harm if one whispers Tasbih (glorification of Allah) to themselves. Rather, they will attain great reward for that. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The dearest words to Allah are four: Subhan Allah (Glory be to Allah), Al-Hamdulillah (Praise be to Allah), Wa la ilaha illa-Allah (There is no god but Allah), Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest).) The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: (Two words (sentences or utterances) that are very easy for the tongue to say, and the most beloved to the Gracious Almighty and very heavy in the scales (of reward) (And they are):Subhan Allah Wa bi-Hamdihi; Subhan Allahi-Il-'Adhim (Glorified be Allah and praise is due to Him, glorified be Allah, The Great)) There are many Hadiths narrated regarding the merits of reciting many types of Adhkar (remembrance of Allah).

Reciting Surah Al-Kahf on Friday

Q: Is it Mandub (commendable) to recite Surah Al-Kahf on Thursday night or on Friday?

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A: There are many Hadith Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration) narrated, which indicate that it is commendable to recite Surah Al-Kahf on Friday. It is authentically reported that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) used to do that. Such a great Companion would not do that practice out of his own initiative. Rather his practice indicates that it is an act of Sunnah.

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Surah Al-Kahf on Thursday night or on Friday?

A: There are many Hadiths narrated on the merit of reciting Surah Al-Kahf on Friday. Although all these Hadiths fall under the category of Da`if (weak), scholars stated that they support one another and may thus be taken as a proof for desirability to recite Surah Al-Kahf on Friday. It is authentically reported that this was the practice of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him).

Therefore, it is desirable to follow the example of that great Companion (may Allah be pleased with him) and to put the Hadiths referred to in effect. These Hadiths support one another and are further strengthened by the practice of the Companion. As for reciting this Surah on Thursday night, I know of no evidence supporting this. Thus, it becomes clear that it is not prescribed to recite it on that night. May Allah grant us success!

What is the ruling on a person that observes no Salah but the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and the days of Ramadan?

Q: Many people are accustomed to offering Salah (Prayer) only on Fridays or during Ramadan. They support their view with the Hadith which states: (the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer followed by another Jumu`ah Prayer, Ramadan followed by another Ramadan expiate sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.) **Is that true?**

A: This misplaced deduction is indicative of their ignorance and deviation from the right path. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has made it obligatory on us to offer the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers, the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and the fast of the month of Ramadan. We have to fulfill all obligations and avoid whatever Allah has declared prohibited. Therefore, we have to offer the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers, the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, fast in Ramadan, and perform Hajj. We have to do all this while hoping for Allah's reward and fearing His punishment. If we do that, Allah will grant us greater reward and will facilitate things for us in the future. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stressed this very meaning in the same Hadith mentioned above. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The Five Obligatory Daily Prayers, the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer followed by another Jumu`ah Prayer, Ramadan followed by another Ramadan

expiate sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) clarifies the fact that these acts of worship expiate minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided. This clearly indicates the improper understanding of the questioner that led him to jump to wrong conclusions. These acts of worship as mentioned in the Hadith expiate sins only if obligatory duties are fulfilled and major sins are avoided. This is indicated by the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) which reads: (If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall expiate from you your (small) sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance (i.e. Paradise).) In this Ayah (Qur'anic verse), Allah informs us that expiation of sins and entering Jannah (Paradise) are contingent upon avoiding major sins. One who commits these sins will incur Allah's curse and wrath and will be destined to enter Hellfire. This person's Iman (faith) will be invalid and Allah and His Messenger declare their disownment of him, which indicates the grievousness of falling into major sins. This is like the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("May Allah curse the thief; (even if) he steals an egg and so his hand is cut off or steals a rope and so his hand is cut off....) Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed

the wine-presser, the one who has it pressed, the one who drinks it, the one who delivers it, the one to whom it is delivered, the one who serves it, the one who sells it, the one who benefits from the price paid for it, the one who buys it, and the one for whom it is bought. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also cursed the receiver and the payer of Riba (usury), the one who records it and the two witnesses to the transaction. He also cursed women who pluck their eyebrows and the ones who have that done for them, those who add false hair and those who have that done for them. This is also like the Hadith which states: ("A committer of Zina (unlawful sexual intercourse), when he commits Zina, does not commit it while he is a believer; and he does not drink Khamr (alcohol), when he drinks it, while he is a believer...") In another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: (I have no concern with that woman who wails loudly, shaves her hair and tears (her garment in grief).) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). There are many Hadiths that bear the same meaning.

Muslims have unanimously agreed that fasting the month of Ramadan or offering the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer does not absolve one from other obligations of Islam and that the Jumu`ah Prayer does not permit them to abandon other obligatory Salah. It merely allows them not to offer the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer on Friday. Therefore, whoever claims or believes that offering the Jumu`ah Prayer or fasting the month of Ramadan exempt them from other obligations of Islam will be regarded as a Kafir (disbeliever).

According to all scholars, a person who claims this must hasten to make Tawbah (repentance) to Allah (may He be Praised). The reason is that if they believe so, they will be denying obligations of Islam and legalizing what Islam has declared prohibited. This is the very meaning of Kufr (disbelief), aberration, and fabricating lies about Allah unknowingly. We ask Allah to grant us protection and safety from this.

Errors committed in Khutbahs (sermon) of Ibn Nabatah

Q: What is the ruling on a person who depends on a particular kind of books in delivering the Friday Khutbah, like the book of Khutbahs written by Ibn Nabatah?

A: Khutbahs of Ibn Nabatah contain some errors. In order to gain experience in his field, the Khatib (preacher) has to look for good books written for the purpose of delivering Khutbahs. There are so many books which contain beneficial Khutbahs like ones written by Shaykh `Abdullah Al-Khayyat, Shaykh `Abdul-Rahman Al-Sa`dy, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Qa`ud, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih ibn `Uthaymin, Shaykh `Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Hasan and other people of knowledge. You also have to quote in your Khutbahs Ayahs (Qur'anic verses)

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and authentic Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). You also have to choose the topic of your Khutbahs according to the circumstances.

One should avoid reading Khutbahs written by people who are not well-known for knowledge, righteousness, or their following the belief of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body).

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!